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WRITING ON THE BODY:

Martlet

photo by Richard Warrington

> Is virtual play really where it's at?

"Am I an addict?" Six cybersex lessons

by Donna St. Louis

I swear I'm not a cyber-slut. And if you think you can get into my virtual panties guess again. I have at least 20 hours of experience in the wonderful, yet exhausting world of erotic chat rooms and if there is one thing I won't give up, it's my virtual virginity.

For pure fun, of course, and maybe for a good laugh, I chose to spend a few hours each day in erotic chat rooms. Thousands of people log onto these sites every day. With the intentions of discovering why, I joined the masses to see what it is all about.

My findings surprised me. Despite my expectations, I didn't walk into chat rooms with people having cyber orgies; people don't necessarily log on to have cyber sex all the time. Instead, I found other users engaging in the mundane subjects of life such as fishing or the latest Primus album. I also found that instead of sacrificing an average of two hours each night for four days in the chat site, I spent at least five hours each day. Does that make me an addict?

Lesson #1

Not all chat rooms are created equal. My first night on the circuit was a disaster. And while my lack of chat room etiquette may have had something to do with my presence being met by utter silence, I personally blame my vile experience on the pathetic web site that I was on. With almost 100 chat rooms to choose from, with names such as Pussy Palace, Analopolis, the Five Knuckle Shuffle or the Gang Bang room, this particular site was like an avid porn freak's paradise. While it was ok for another user named Clitorina to announce, "I AM HEEL DRAGGER. I AM A MALCONTENT. I SEE DEAD PEOPLE," it was not ok for me to mention the word 'jimmer-jammer' without all male user's leaving instantaneously.

Lesson #2

Never use the word 'jimmer-jammer.' Fortunately, I never had to go back to that site again since my next search for some good times in the chat rooms found me a site that is truly built for the seriously horny chatter. With a friendly design to keep the users feeling comfortable and safe, and the option to send private messages or create a private room, my new-found site ended up as my new-found home.

Erotic chat rooms lived up to every pre-conceived notion of being the area of refuge for the digital savvy introvert looking for love in all the wrong places. These chat rooms provide a new space for interaction that social misfits might not have other wise. Unfortunately this leads to an abundance of pent-up male testosterone waiting for a female to acknowledge their presence.

Lesson #3

Some girls have all the luck. My male persona, whom I named G-force, failed miserably at trying to get any attention and not one female user replied to his relentless attempts. Meanwhile my female alias, Gigi, was never short of men sending private messages that practically begged for anything from basic conversation to requests for a sensual rendezvous.

While I couldn't stomach the thought of exchanging sexy thoughts on-line, others really get off on having cyber sex. For some it may be a casual encounter that is exciting, new, and totally anonymous.

Lesson #4

Save yourself cigarettes and cab fare. Cyber sex gives new meaning to a one-night stand since there are no regrets, no worries and no excuses for having to leave right after. There is also an undoubtedly intimate feeling to being in a private chat room with another person. I honestly thought that I could type in the motions of love with a stranger, but the image I get of someone else being turned on while I type in a sentence describing something like a kiss makes me ill.

Lesson #5

Addicts beware. When it is addictive, cyber sex becomes a desperate form of release that is similar to a bulimic's need to binge and purge. While I didn't try to find out if this is true I don't doubt the addictive nature of the chat rooms for a second. In the pursuit of a greater understanding for the phenomenon I found that the chat rooms could be a nice place to hang out providing that I was in the right kind. It's like finding an online community of users who love to meet new people without the aesthetic boundaries of the real world and it beats watching television.

Lesson #6

Cyber space can hold only so many big schlongs.

Erotic chat rooms may be a nice place to meet new people, maybe even a site for finding true love or a really good orgasm. But ultimately, it isn't real when every male you meet tells you he's handsome, in great shape and has a great schlong. While the cyber lounges may be a place to discover new sexual experiences that one might not have in the real world such as S&M or bisexuality. But the time spent doesn't compare to anything in the real world. I don't ever want to lose my virtual virginity and as I write this, I've made a silent pact to never enter the erotic chat rooms again. After all, I can't even start the day with out a coffee: do I really need to add another addiction to my daily routine?

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EDITORIAL:

Cybersex leaves us virtually alienated

photo by Tathra Street

"As I look back over the many years of my frivolous life, I remember at one time I coveted an official post with a tenure of land and at another time I was anxious to confine myself within the walls of a monastery. Yet I kept aimlessly wondering on like a cloud in the wind...it is because I believe there is no place in this world that is not an unreal dwelling."
- Basho

Outside the neighbours sit half-naked on their porch blaring the Sex Pistols. It's summer and so we turn toward the topic of bodies in the season of beer, back porches, bare skin.

When we decided this issue's theme should revolve around the body, I was weary. We create a culture in which ads for Calvin Klein's Obesession are iconic. We overdose on image, placing beauty in a cloudy realm above genius.

With the majority of students being 20 to 30 somethings here at UVic, the summer campus scene becomes a Fantasy Island of bronzed immortals.

Flesh is decadent and sweet. I spent the weekend drunk on mango juice. But our skin is the most political thing we own. Where do we place our priorities?

Mark Redgwell, in his gut-knocking piece on living with disease, reminds us we are all born dying. Krisztina Kuhn rants on the proclivity of unwanted body hair, those strands we brand wild and ugly against the skin. Tory Bowman looks at aging and ailing politicized: the people shut inside whose bodies need home support get tag-teamed with immigrant women paid lower wages for their labour in exchange for the chance to become a Canadian citizen.

And then the topic of cybersex. . The computer facilitates the disembodied self even better than the radio or the television. Sit back and diddle away with panties at your ankles, banking on a head full of RAM. Ever tried to get through a chat room-induced orgasm while the computer's brain short circuits? Does that constitute simulated, cyberfied premature ejaculation? I'll have to ask Tom Howell.

When you consider that more than 80 per cent of the world's population calls a mouse a pest and a MUD (multi-user dungeon) wet dirt, cybersex becomes the utlimate display of Western decadence, and loneliness.

I wonder if Basho would call the virtual world a real dwelling place.

I'm no Luddite, but I wonder where we're headed as a culture if we get off on morphing ourselves into various sexual personas on the Web. How we draw distinctions between our virtual selves and our "real life" identities? Cybersex is easy. It's anonymous. Hell, it's disease-free and you don't even have to worry about making the bed.

Any time we like we have the power to step through the computer screen like Alice stepped through the looking glass. We create virtual selves and build virtual communities. But what is virtual Wonderland doing to us? What do we take back to our families and our communities here on planet Earth? How are we changed by the ability to live a life, or a series of lives, on-line? What does it mean for our sacks of bone and flesh?

If Calvin Klein reflects our obesession with perfection, cyborgs and simulated sex speaks volumes about our cultural inclination to want to escape what we were born doing.

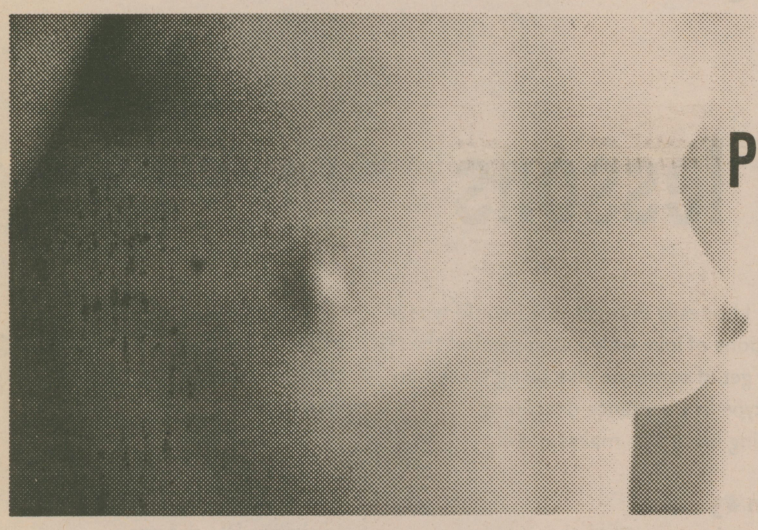

photo by Wyndy Palmer

VIEWPOINT:

Piercing past the body's hard places

by bren simmers

Canada Day Long Weekend, I find myself not at the lake, or camped out at Ruckle Point with the rest of Victoria, but lying back on a piercer's table, much like a doctor's office, only this time I don't have my feet in metal stirrups with oven mitts on them.

There is no mountainside picture to gaze at, but there are some svelte 40s pinup girls and graffiti action to distract the nervous eye. "I'm just putting the clamp on, it will pinch, much like a clothespeg, but it shouldn't hurt, my piercer explains."

She lines up the needle, having already marked the holes with felt pen. There is a hot pain as the needle goes through, and a tug as it pulls out the other side. She feeds in the rings and closes them with a bead. No excruciating pain, perhaps even pleasurable.

I feel lightheaded and sit up, feet dangling over the edge of the table, as I suck on a lollipop.

Six years ago, I sat on another table in Vancouver's East Side, getting my first piercing, a nose ring that didn't last. So why am I here again? It's Pride; it's Urge Tattoo's Pierce-a-Thon; it's cheap. But really it comes down to this: I'm not scared anymore. I've been wanting to get my nipples pierced for years, but the pain, the money, there had always been an excuse. Something taboo about marking the body.

I want my piercing to have meaning. My lover points to each piercing on her body and tells me a story, each marking a lesson she has learned. My breasts have always been something I've been ashamed of. It's not that they're too big or too small, but like many other women, I have hair around my nipples.

Growing up, I thought I was a freak, some kind of abhoration. No one talked about body hair. Period. A few years ago, I tired of plucking and decided to let them be (for the most part). Silver rings celebrate a new respect for my body. Tight shirt and bra-less, I invite people to stare into what shamed me most, to find desire in the hard places we carry.

The other day, my lover showed me a picture of my breasts taken before the piercing. They were beautiful, and I had never seen that before.

I fill a shot glass with saline solution, throw it back on my nipple and shake. I feel like a porn star. Two days later and they are tender, feels like I've been wearing nipple clamps too long. A week later they feel dry, and are healing well. I can sleep on my side again. There is so much awareness in my nipples, it is hard to ignore them, especially the near constant arousal.

On treasure trails and nipple hair

by Krisztina Kun

The plucked, the hated, the ignored, the subdued with incantations of I wish I wasn't so hairy, I wish I wasn't so hairy. Absently fondled follicles while on the phone.

These persistent little black hairs always come back no matter what arsenal is deployed, rising and curling, rising and curling, 'til finally with reluctance, a dismal acceptance becomes emphatic. A mantra: yes, I'm hairy. Fuck you and your bikini wax.

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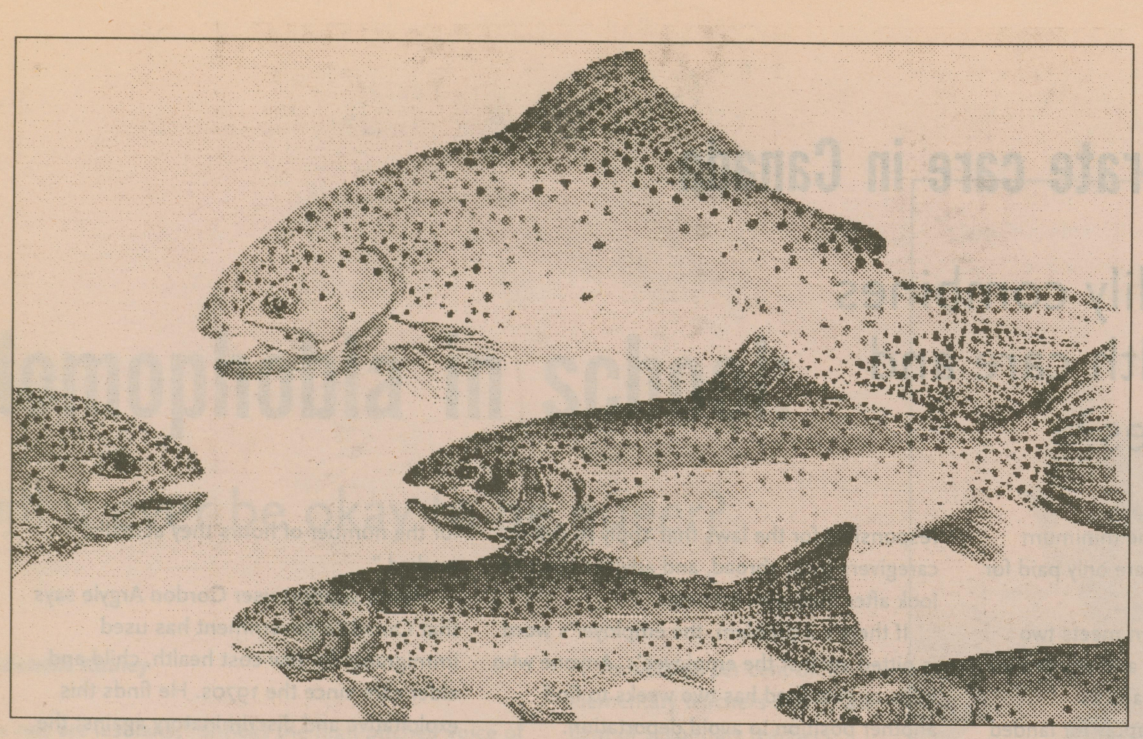

Seeing life through a fishy lens

by Gillian Jerome

When humans ask each other to see things through different eyes, we rarely consider how a coho salmon or a kestrel sees the world.

But UVic biologist Craig Hawryshyn does. He's working on finding out how fish and other animals use ultraviolet vision to interpret polarized light patterns in the sky.

What does that mean for humans? Not much. Only people who've lost a lens in the eye, like someone with cataracts for example, can see ultraviolet light.

Salmon swimming from the ocean look up through the water for UV direction as they swim home, reading splotchy, heterogeneous designs.

Polarized light happens when the sun scatters photons into the atmosphere and they collide with water molecules, for example.

The resulting UV patterns give animals all sorts of information useful for mating, hunting and travel.

Hawryshyn and two other scientists first discovered ultraviolet receptors in animals in 1982. Since then scientists the world over have been trying to see the world through the eyes of other animals – birds, snakes, and some mammals.

Research on ultraviolet vision is helping everyone from fish hatchery managers to bird watchers who may be interested in explaining behaviour, like how kestrels capture voles.

Like their fishy friends, kestrels interpret ultraviolet light. Once they fly over a patch of vole urine, the hunt is on. Kestrels can see fluorescent light signals resulting from UV light hitting the urine. The little winged captors follow the golden trail to find their feed.

Hawryshyn says it's important for the public to know how federally-funded scientists like him are spending their money. Right now he's plucking the retinas out of coho salmon to figure out the best time to transfer them from fresh water into the ocean. It's a timely study.

The federal government just announced a $14.4 million-dollar investment in aquaculture research.

Hawryshyn's work is funded by a federal project called Coasts Under Distress, intended to boost results in the fish farming industry. Some hatcheries lose 70 per cent of their juvenile salmon stock because there's no science involved in the transfer from fresh water breeding.

After overdosing the fish with an anaesthetic, they pull the retina from the eye and use spectroscopy (which analyzes the characteristics of spectral light absorbed by the tissue) to find out whether the visual pigment in the eyes is adjusted for travel in fresh water or marine.

Do eyeballs really feel like peeled grapes? Hawryshyn says they're solid little suckers, slippery yet rigid from hydrostatic pressure.

As far as the retina goes, if it has switched to a visual pigment suited for marine water, then the fish are ready to be transferred from fresh water to the ocean.

Considering that all fish are raised with the same variables in a hatchery, this switch in visual pigment is likely to happen in sync, something like 100,000 synchro swimmers donning sunglasses in tandem.

Theoretically, Hawryshyn's work means plucking a couple of coho retinas out and analyzing them could save the BC fish farming industry lots of money.

But it's taken a while for people in the industry to clue into the latest research.

"People fear science when things get too technical," he says. "But this is a very technical science about something we can't see."

City cycling gets a boost

by Gillian Jerome

The possibility of getting side-swiped on your bike is always a crapshoot in this town but a new stand-alone bike committee on city council may improve the odds.

Last month Mayor Alan Lowe approved a bike committee reporting directly to council, similar to ones in in Esquimalt and Saanich.

"Now we can focus on how to do it rather than whether or nor it should get done," says long-time bike activist John Luton of the Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition (GVCC).

He says the committee will flex their new cycling muscles to make major arterials like Bay St. more bike-friendly.

Mayor Lowe adds that bike lanes on Johnson St. bridge and Government St. are upcoming projects.

"Now that we're the Cycling Capital of Canada we can promote cycling as its own mode of transport and look for grants to improve cycling conditions in the city," says Lowe.

Why such a big step for cycling now? Luton says he thinks in the past Mayor Lowe has been gun-shy about making too many committees.

"It's better now than never," says Chain Chain Chain Bike Check and Cycling Services owner Jeff Stamp.

"It'll help the development of biking on South Vancouver Island," said Stamp, a rider himself and a well-known community advocate at his Broad St. location.

Stamp says he hopes the committee will improve the reckless habits of both motorists and riders. His suggestions include building new bike paths, extending old ones and calming traffic in high-density areas.

Martlet photo by Patti Edgar

Car co-op needs a jump start

by Dave Crothall

In the world of alternative transport there are innumerable ideas to decrease dependence on the private auto.

Car sharing, an operation where people share a small number of cars, has proved useful in many parts of the world, including Europe where over 50,000 people share cars. In some Canadian cities, co-op memberships have risen dramatically over a couple of years.

However, like the program in Quebec City, the Victoria's co-op hasn't grown dramatically over its short life-span, hovering at around 40 to 50 memberships since the not-for-profit organization began in 1997.

Former member Tyrone Guthrie says it hasn't been without logistical blips, including double bookings and mechanical foul-ups left unattended. Even though Guthrie left the Victoria Car Share Co-op due to a lack of available cars and some financial qualms, he says car sharing is a good concept with good intentions.

Board secretary Erik Kaye admits that the VCSC, like other co-operatives, has experienced some financial challenges. As a result, the Car Share was not generating enough revenue to sustain four vehicles. This lack of revenue may have been due in part to tardy membership payments, but Kaye says the organization is more solid now.

Volunteers run the co-op with a part-time mechanic responsible for the upkeep of the vehicles. VCSC members who use the vehicles are responsible for a per kilometre fee and per hour fee that covers the cost of gas. There is also a refundable deposit of $400 upon joining the co-operative and a monthly fee ranging from six to 21 dollars depending on the use of the shared vehicle. Cars are reserved and booked by telephoning the VCSC office.

Since car sharing requires an adequate number of users within a convenient walking or cycling distance from the vehicles, high-density areas like James Bay and Fernwood are more suited.

With a more stable financial foundation and an ideal car sharing situation in Victoria, the Car Share plans to grow at a sustainable rate with the support of full-time staff, says Kaye. This staff will hopefully be hired with the help of some summer fundraising.

Danielle McCann, a present member of the Victoria Car Share Co-op, says that there may be times when cars are unavailable, but those times are rare.

McCann and her partner Chris Frye are joint members who use the co-op to provide a second mode of transport.

"I'm trying to maintain my goal never to own a car," says McCann, who cycles to her work at UVic.

Car sharing requires members to use a combination of modes, as exemplified by McCann and Frye, rather than relying completely on the automobile. Combining the pay-as-you-drive system of car sharing with several transportation options (i.e. cycling, bus, walking, etc.) encourages car sharing members to drive less.

An acting advisor to the VCSC, transportation expert Todd Litman says he doesn't oppose co-operatives, but he thinks car sharing can turn a profit.

Businesses with long hours could work in conjunction with rental car companies to allow renting by the hour.

In a hypothetical example, 7-Eleven, a company with long hours, could work in conjunction with Hertz Rent-a-Car. There could be Hertz rental cars at the 7-Eleven and drivers would be pre-approved much like a regular car sharing operation.

This pre-approval process would minimize paperwork and save time for both the service provider and the driver.

Since the operation would be for profit, the costs might be slightly higher than a co-operative, but the availability of cars would likely be better.

VCSC has two other cars besides the aforementioned minivan to serve specific neighbourhoods. If you can hit the Fairfield area for a chance to share a car, you can land a cruise in the silver bullet of minivans and do some summer scoping.

Filipino women exploited for cut-rate care in Canada

Live-In Caregiver Program handily combines immigration with for profit health care and does a number on us. Who cares?

by Tory Bowman

Sooner or later most of us will find ourselves reliant upon Canada's social safety net. We get sick, we become disabled, we grow old, we depend upon others.

As the government shifts to for-profit services, we should think about how federal programs will affect our lives as we age and our bodies deteriorate.

With fewer federal transfers to the provinces and global bodies like the WTO gradually gaining control over our publicly funded health-care system, people with disabilities and older people using home support and home nursing are finding themselves either without service, or paying for health care out of their pockets.

Three years ago, Robert Bernays, a salesman in Victoria, started a private business called the Caregiver Placement Services of Canada (CPSC), providing live-in care to Canadian clients on minimum two-year contracts.

The company has a database of more than 100 people living in the Philippines who want to participate in the federal government's Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP).

Bernays says that his organization operates "totally above ground" and boasts a customer-satisfaction guarantee.

Bernays matches Filipino people eager to immigrate with people needing 24-hour care.

While visiting his former wife's family in the Philippines, Bernays was approached by people looking to come to Canada for employment. He saw an opportunity for a match-making service.

Canadian clients pay $1,500 to $1,700 per month for 24-hour home care labour, after an initial $3,500 for placement fees and transportation, totalling half of what most people currently pay for live-in care.

Bernays charges Filipino migrants $324 (3000 pesos) for sign-up fees.

During our conversation, Bernays was quick to point out that "the low salary is the only hardship facing these Filipinos."

He says that the wage, although low in Canadian dollars, is more than four times what they would make in the Philippines. (Live-in caregivers receive the minimum wage of $7.15 per hour and are only paid for 40 hours per week.)

As he sees it, the program meets two needs: it gives Filipino men and women the opportunity to come to Canada as independent migrants and apply for landed immigrant status after two years. It also provides Canadian families with an affordable alternative to institutional care.

Thoroughly stumped at the lack of interest in Canada, Bernays was kind enough to offer me a $250 commission for any prospective employers I could forward his way. I guess that's one way of drumming up business.

> As a home support worker since 1982, Purcell has heard many people refer to live-ins as "slave labourers

According to the federal government, the LCP meets a need for skilled workers who are willing to sign a mandatory two-year contract, to work for minimum wage exclusively for one employer, and get paid for 40 hours per week of live-in caregiving.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) stipulates that prospective employers must be able to show that they have made reasonable efforts to hire a Canadian or a foreign worker already in Canada.

Employers are responsible for finding foreign live-in caregivers on their own through advertisements, personal contacts, or hiring agencies like LCP.

Prospective caregivers must have the equivalent of a Canadian high school education, six months full-time training or 12 months of experience in a related occupation, and a good command of English or French. They may change jobs without their employer's permission as long as they remain live-in caregivers.

The government has no authority to intervene in the employer/employee relationship or to enforce the terms and conditions of employment.

Canadian immigration holds employees responsible for the laws that apply to live-in caregivers from abroad, and advises them to look after their own interests.

If there's a problem, the employer's word is pitted against the employee's. Anyone who quits or gets fired has two weeks to find another position to avoid deportation.

According to Narda Nelson of Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women-Canada (GAATW), this stipulation can lead to abuse.

Donna Purcell, Chair of the Local 401 of the BC Government Employees Union (BCGEU), says her union is totally against the program, but can't do anything about it. She says the federal government, in their statements that "Canadians are not willing to do the work," masks that the work is 24 hour-a-day live-in care for $7.15 per hour, with payment for only 10 of those 24 hours in the union contract.

Purcell pointed out that this wage is what teenagers make working at Burger King, whereas many people consider home support and home nursing care a career.

"What it is that they expect us to do? To be at the whim of the client 24 hours a day, work for minimum wage because we are in the community or a home setting, and work seven days per week? When are we supposed to raise our families? We have lives, too."

As a home support worker since 1982, Purcell has heard many people refer to live-ins as "slave labourers."

In the last bout of contract negotiations with the region, BCGEU suggested an alternative to live-ins: instead of 24-hour caregiving – for which the lowest seniority worker gets paid $14.80 per hour for 10 hours out of the 24 – union representatives suggested a rotating split-shift system, 12 hours on and 12 off.

"That was rejected during negotiations," says Purcell. "It would cost the region too much money. They would have to pay people for the number of hours they actually worked."

Home support user Gordon Argyle says that Canada's government has used immigrants for low-cost health, child and elder care since the 1970s. He finds this exploitative and discriminatory against the people receiving care and those immigrating.

The Philippines have been under a labour export policy since the 1970s, with 2-3,000 workers leaving daily last year.

The majority are women, highly educated and skilled workers exercising their only option to provide for their families. Canada has a long history of caregivers migrating here, says GATTW spokesperson Narda Nelson. It's the LCP's live-in stipulation which is new.

GAATW advocates that the LCP, in its discrimination against women, should be changed to eliminate the live-in requirement, and that the federal government should play a stronger role in monitoring abuses.

As a migrant and immigrant community in Canada, Filipinos are a striking example of how Canada's need for affordable home care, home support and a cheap national child care program corresponds to an underdeveloped country's need to send their people abroad to earn and remit dollars which help keep their distorted economies afloat.

The Philippine Women Centre in Vancouver, formed in 1995 by a group of six Filipino women, aims to empower and educate women of Filipino origin.

Centre volunteer May Faralles sees the LCP as indentured service for Filipino women. "Canada ensures the underdevelopment of people from the third world by maintaining Filipino women as a pool of cheap and segregated labour," she says.

To Faralles, the only solution to the harmful impacts of this form of systemic racism against Filipino migrant workers is to scrap the federal program and stop mixing health care with immigration laws.

World news

Crackdown on human rights

(Pakistan, Amnesty International – July 7)

Scores of political activists from the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) were arrested in and around Lahore in a pre-dawn military sweep prior to a rally planned for July 8.

Background Leaders of the PML have stated that some 300 party members including former parliamentarians have been arrested without charge and that arrests were continuing.

Amnesty International called the events in Lahore, a city situated 25 kilometres from the Pakistan/India border, a blatant crackdown on basic human rights.

Punjab home ministry sources have reportedly confirmed to the media that 93 PML members had been arrested to stop a procession planned by the wife of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Kulsoom Nawaz intended to lead a procession from Peshawar to Lahore on 8 July to collect donations for the drought-affected people in Sindh and Balochistan. She has risen to political prominence since the overthrow of her husband's government and his imprisonment for hijacking and his trial on corruption charges.

CLC names Wal-Mart "Sweatshop Retailer of the Year"

(Canadian Labour Congress – June 19)

As Wal-Mart collected the 36th annual "Canadian Retailer of the Year" award from the Retail Council of Canada in June, they were simultaneously awarded the Canadian Labour Congress's first annual "Sweatshop Retailer of the Year."

"Wal-Mart merits this award based on their record," said CLC President Ken Georgetti. "Given that Wal-Mart is one of the biggest users of sweatshop labour on the planet, they will also receive the Sweatshop Retailer of the Year award outside the convention."

Georgetti cited a report released in May by the US-based National Labour Committee, which found that Walmart was guilty of several sweatshop labour practices at the Qin Shi handbag factory in Zhongshan City, Guangding Province.

Workers may leave the factory grounds for only 1.5 hours per day. Shifts are 14 hours a day, seven days a week, 30 days a month. Average take home pay is three cents per hour. A 98 hour work-week puts $3.10 in the hand.

In addition, workers are housed 16 to a room and fed two dismal meals a day. Eight hundred workers have been fired for demanding labour rights.

Silencing dissent

(ANGOLA, Amnesty International – July 12)

Journalists have been systematically harassed and detained in Angola simply for criticising the government or its policies, Amnesty International (AI) said in a July 5 press release.

According to AI, Andre Mussamo, a radio journalist, was accused of divulging state secrets in an article, which he had drafted but not published. He was detained for over three months and acquitted in June 2000 after a court found no evidence to support the charges against him.

On March 31, 2000 Rafael Marques, a freelance journalist who had written an article criticizing President Jose Eduardo dos Santos, was sentenced to six months imprisonment and a heavy fine for defamation. He was unlawfully detained and denied legal counsel of his choice during his trial.

AI reports that journalists are attempting to report the mass violations of human rights taking place in Angola, such as extrajudicial executions <http://amnesty.cupboard.org/news/press/eje.shtml> of suspected criminals and political opponents by government soldiers and police.

- compiled by Craig Battle

Living with disease, losing your wings

by Mark Redgwell

I became mortal 12 years ago went I was 17. I had been having strange pains in my legs that were especially bad when I played hockey. Sometimes I was in such pain after a game that I could barely walk and my mom would take me to the emergency at St. Paul's in Saskatoon.

I was soon diagnosed with ankylosing spondylitis (AS), a disease where the immune system gets confused and attacks the body. Although AS can hit any joint, it mainly attacks the spine, inflaming its joints and leading to a bony overgrowth that can eventually fuse the vertebrae into a single immovable unit. Some wannabe-poet doctor labelled it bamboo spine. I prefer the Latin.

Prognosis was not a cause for joy. The rheumatologist said there was no cure for my condition and the only things she could offer me were drugs that might not work and would probably lead to ulcers.

My mom said I was angry and withdrawn for a few years after I was diagnosed. I only remember being upset for a little bit and then shrugging it off, but her observation makes sense. Around that time I started to act out. I didn't realize it at the time, but my actions were the frantic fumbling of an angel who just had his wings ripped off. I wanted my immortality back and my efforts were desperate proof that I was deserving.

So I did anything that made me feel pumped and alive. I stole a mini-van, tossed roman candles inside parked cars, and reallocated brass mailboxes to the needy (houses with especially ugly mailboxes). Once, I placed over 30 abducted lawn ornaments on my friend's lawn: pelicans, donkeys, ducks, and gnomes all marching in frightening Disney fashion towards her front door.

I did a lot of other things I am less proud of too. On my mom's birthday, I was arrested by the police for breaking into a warehouse to steal some stereo equipment with a friend.

I don't know if I have ever stopped fumbling for those wings. I spent eight years chasing alternative medicine pipe dreams. I tried everything from acupuncture and naturopathy to Reiki and yoga. Conventional medicine has its shortcomings, but it doesn't have the implicit blame I found in alternative medicine.

New Age nonsense encourages the sick to believe they will find a cure if they search long and try hard enough. Ultimately, failures of the treatment are attributed to negative thought patterns or other patient-as-cause excuses. My deteriorating condition marked me as a failure.

During this time the mundane would often torture me. Watching someone bend at the hips to pick up a fallen glove was a reminder of why my body couldn't do the same. The joy of seeing a child jumping into her father's arms was lost in believing I was not able to be a father. I love kids, but I had such difficulty dealing with my disease that I couldn't imagine providing the support needed to raise a child.

Two months after I started college in 1996, the AS attacked my hip and I could not walk without a cane. I persevered, but it was the hollow effort of a religious zealot afraid to look his failing faith squarely in the eye. My healing and sanity depended on knowing the answer and believing in the Truth. I had to believe that what I was doing was bringing me closer to a cure. I had to believe that deliverance was possible. I was still grasping at feathers.

A year later I hit the ground. It was the first day of fall classes and both hips were inflamed to the point where I could only make the smallest of movements without passing out with pain. I couldn't make it to the bus stop, so I called a cab. It took me three minutes to hobble half way down the driveway. I paused, looked up at the impatient cabdriver, and knew that was it. Though I could make it to the cab, there was no way I could walk to a classroom.

I returned to my cabin and broke down. Despite the pain and difficulty of the last year I had never missed a class due to my disease. Showing up to class symbolized control: no matter how bad it got, I could handle my life because I showed up. I wanted to die.

Instead of giving up my life, I gave up clinging to the immortality I lost 10 years prior. The next day I broke my New Age vows and starting taking hardcore drugs and went to McDonalds. What side effects or drug or diet could possibly be worse than pain so crippling I couldn't even move?

My recovery has been dramatic. These days I bike, rollerblade, dance like a fiend, let four year olds climb on me with abandon, and eat McWhatever-the-fuck-I-want. The day before I started writing this piece, I was at the Folkfest dancing with my buddy's nine-month- old strapped on my back. Thinking about my decaying body turned that wonderful moment into something exquisite.

I know my partial remission cannot simply be due to drugs. I attribute it to accepting my fate as a featherless monkey and devoting my energy to sucking all the joy I can out of life. But if my experiences have taught me anything, it is that I can think and theorize and believe, but I don't know shit.

Martlet photo by Genevieve Mutschler

The sound of the decaying body is feathers falling away. We are hardwired and socialized to believe we are immortal, and then to crave that immortality when it's gone. The person who struggles to paste feathers back on her ape carcass misses the point of being alive. You don't need a fucking boob job or hair replacement, you just need to accept your demotion and get on with life.

We are all born dying. The wise just aren't traumatized when they figure it out.

How death got its meaning

by Adam Harrison

It took more than one death to bring mortality home to me. Until last summer, death touched me repeatedly but failed to leave a bruise.

My earliest memory of death comes from when I was quite young, before I started school. We were visiting my grandparents. My mom came into the room where I was playing, to explain how Tony, a friend of my parents, had taken his own life.

I understood that Tony had died. I knew what death was. But I was too young to think about suicide and why Tony would kill himself.

It was explanation enough that his garage filled up with car exhaust.

Several years later, my half-sister Patsy shot herself in the head with a shotgun shortly after her wedding.

But it wasn't until Grade 7 that I gave suicide much thought. At this age, suicide became a romantic notion. It appealed to me.

While I never attempted to slit my wrists or overdose on pills, I did drunkenly threaten to jump off the bridge into the river one winter night. It was at a junior high party and my girlfriend decided she wanted another guy instead of me.

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Their corpses were on display in the school's graphics room, where I'd had art class earlier in the week. I went to view their bodies after the funeral. I'd never seen a dead body before.

The tables were pushed to the sides of the room and the coffins were in the middle, propped up with metal legs. Small groups of people huddled throughout the room, whispering.

From time to time, someone would let out a sob.

I approached one of the dark wooden caskets and looked down. Inside lay a pallid Ian, wearing make-up and a dark suit, the rouge on his cheeks making him look like a life-sized porcelain doll.

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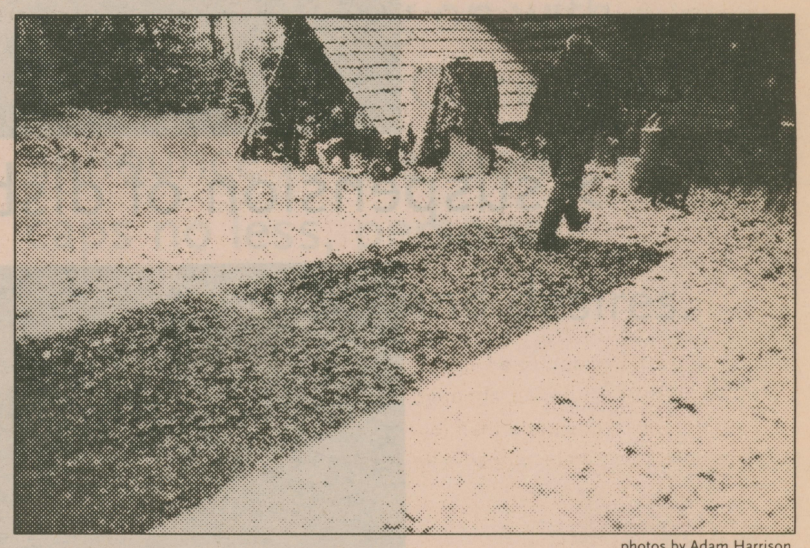
On a train from Rome to Florence, my first time travelling alone, I sat staring at the gentle, sun-drenched hills of Tuscany. I had arrived two days earlier, and I was still adjusting to my new surroundings.

The train was crossing a grassy plain when I noticed a swarm of Carboneri, the Italian police, gathered by the tracks on the opposite side.

Lying on the other set of tracks, directly below my window, was a crumpled pile of flesh and bone, the remains of a shirtless man who had been struck by a train.

His body was folded in half but without any stretching or tension, a rag doll tossed to the floor by a child. I only glimpsed at the corpse briefly before the train sped past, but in that fleeting moment I saw an image I will never forget: the dark, tanned skin of his torso, the strange twist of his legs bent up around his shoulders, the sharp needles of bone sticking out of the tattered navy trousers, the crown of blood matted in his black hair, the one arm bent impossibly around his back.

The Canadian woman sitting next to me gasped, "Oh my God, was that what I thought it was?" I could only nod my head, as the train clack-clacked along the tracks.



photos by Adam Harrison

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When Jenni died, every bold notion I held about death flew out the window. Although we had only known each other for two years, she was one of my closest friends.

Jenni was always willing to do something at the drop of a hat. She'd say yes without hesitation whenever I asked if she wanted to go swimming, or go for coffee, or go walking along the beach. A friend once asked Jenni if she wanted to drive to California for reading break with him, and without giving it another thought she said she'd go.

She was always going on adventures, even if she had no money or if she had school projects due. She lived spontaneously, in the now.

She was 21 and beautiful, a talented writer and artist.

But last summer she died when her car went off the road, flipped, and the roof caved in, crushing her. I was never going to see Jenni's mischievous smile tug at the corners of her perfect mouth again.

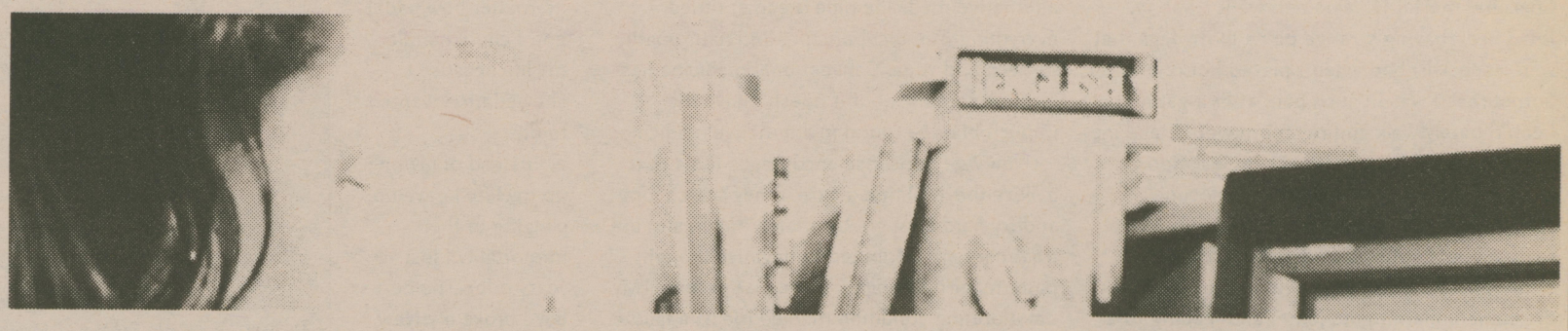
Suddenly I shared something with all those people who have lost friends, lovers and family, people for whom the word "death" actually has meaning, more than dead bodies, cold theories.

I was shocked.

I couldn't believe the news.

Memories of her passed through my mind daily.

I felt the void her death created in my life.



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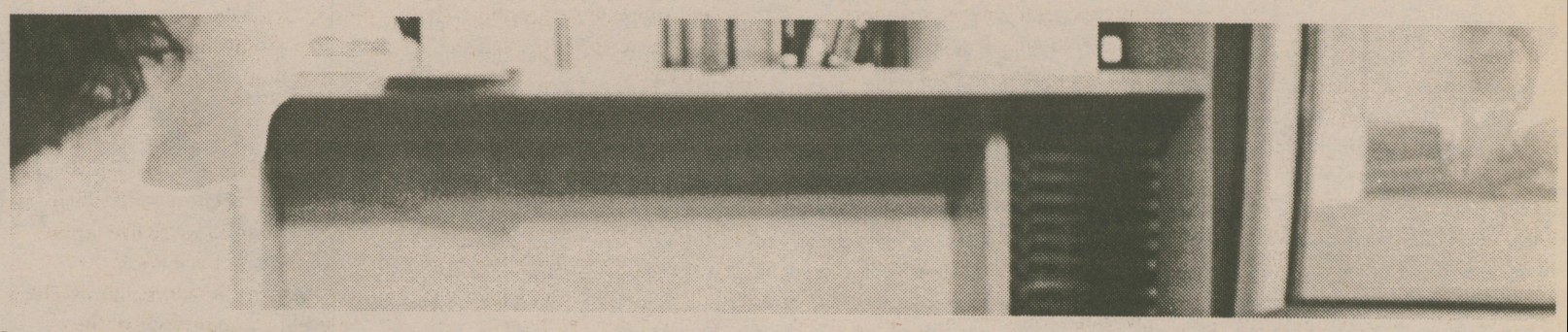

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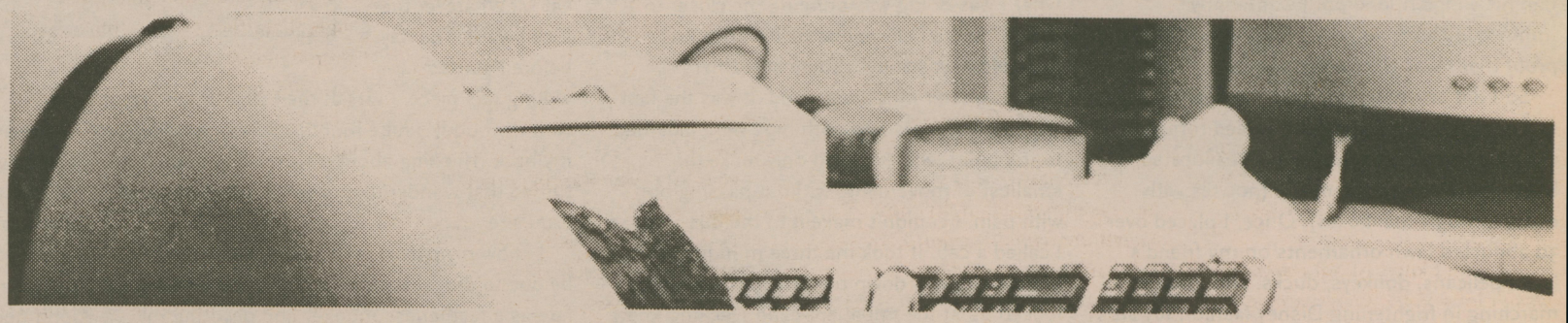

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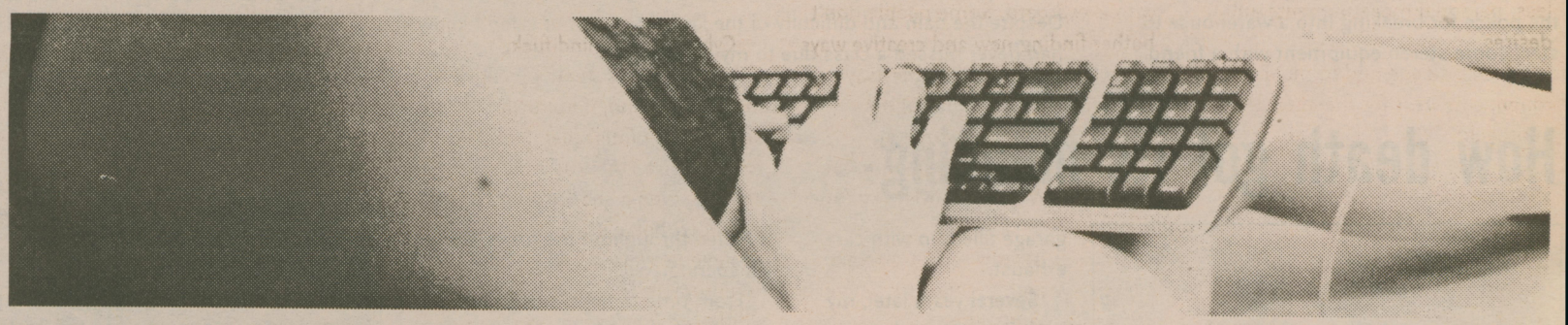

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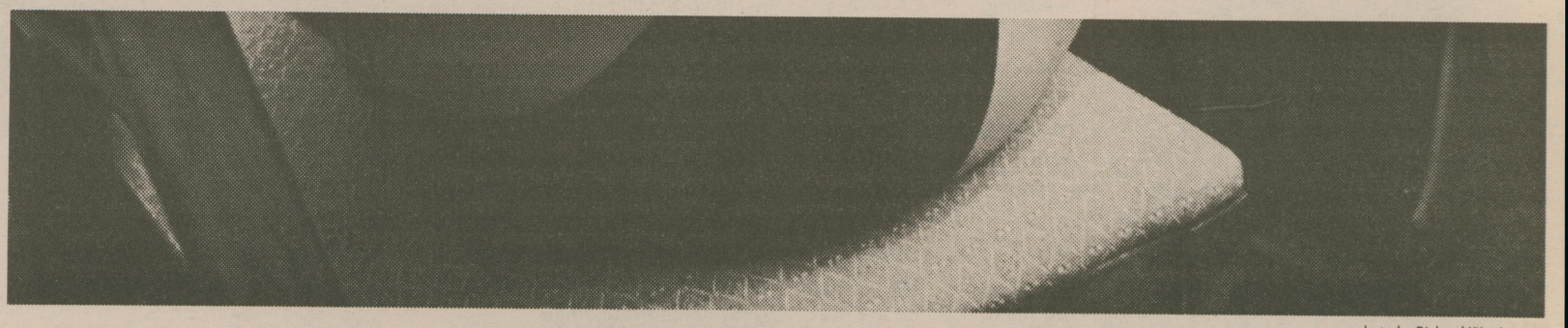

photo by Richard Warrington

A sampling of the best places to get down and diddle on line

> Sizzling suburbia, a sex mall featuring Traci Lords: www.aahsex.com/happyshopper.
> Erotica with a brain and decent chat rooms, links for dating, voyeurism and free pics: www.literotica.com
> A rendezvous at Pussy Palace and Analopolis: www.chatropolis.com.
> Hi-fi gif animation something like Las Vegas on acid: www.queendom.com
> A snoozy Dionysian afternoon of literary erotica with tasteful black and whites: www.nerve.com
> Apollonian on the rocks: www.fastnfreeporn.com
> Self-esteem tests and soul searching: www.queendom.com
> Vaginal dryness, g-crest, and female ejaculation in a jungle setting: www.doctorg.com
> A glance at the swing scene in Lethbridge, Alberta: www.lilithweb.com, and link to chinookpls@hotmail.com

- compiled by Tom Howell and Gillian Jerome

Other resources:

Check out *MUTE* magazine, both the online and hard copy versions. For reading on virtual anthropology: *Life on the Screen* by Sherri Turkle, *Digital Delirium* by Arthur and Louise Kroker, *Cyborgs@Cyberspace: An Ethnographer Looks at the Future* by David Hakken, *Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation* by Don Tapscott, *Modest Witness @Second Millenium Female Man Meets Onco Mouse: Feminism and Technoscience* by Donna Harroway.

> ru.coming?

by Spencer Maybee

Your lover is in bed asleep and you're on-line jacking/jilling off while you type out your fantasy with one hand to someone named "Alex" from Texas, who is 5'10, 135lbs with short peroxide-blonde hair, piercings in all the right places and a thing for Lynch flicks.

Your lover stirs, mumbles through the pillow: "Are you coming to bed?"

"In a minute honey."

I first discovered cybersex about a year ago while I was chatting for the first time. Chat seemed to me to be a forum for idle chitchat with people I didn't even know. It was like the eternal cocktail party where you don't know anyone and no one knows why the host is throwing it. Inevitably, it spiced up.

If I didn't know about cybersex, it wasn't long in the CyberLounge before I learned of it; users would log on with names like HotCock and announce to the room, in caps no less, personal measurements and desires.

HotCock seemed to me a bit rough, so I went for the smooth approach:

```
> taking your earlobe into my
  mouth
> sucking on it a little
> biting it softly
<Cheer-Leader.......>
  oooohhhhh......yeah....i like!!
> my left hand slips onto your
  right knee
> and starts drawing circles,
  spiraling up...
> up your thigh
> in small circles
<Cheer-Leader.......> mmmmmm....
  think i like this too
> to your hip bone
<Cheer-Leader.......> keep
  going.....
> the hand flattens on your hip
  and slips around behind your
  back massaging your buttcheeks
> my right hand slipping up your
  ribs
> navigating the edge of your
  left breast
<Cheer-Leader.......>
  oooohhhhh.....yes.........
> I kiss my way down your neck,
  across your collarbone to your
  armpit
> trace my tongue up your armpit
  along your bicep
> to your forearm
> along the underside of your
  wrist
> and kissing the palm of your
  hand
<Cheer-Leader.......> i like your
  style babe.......
```

Cybersex is an on-line, real-time, text-based exchange between two or more people in which sexual activities are described for the purpose of mutual stimulation. It's a conversation that tickles your brain while you tickle your other parts.

Cybersex has its roots in Multi-User Dungeons (MUDs) of the early 90s. Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) advocates-come-technophiles put the capabilities of the Internet to the test, hosting text-based dungeon adventures on-line in the legacy of text-based fantasy games like the early 80s game, Zork. Users play a character, and a DM (Dungeon Master) or GM (Game Master) orchestrates the fantasy.

The exchange in a chat room isn't necessarily verbal, in that not everything typed is a word. This holds most true for cybersex. Punctuation and alpha-numerics are put to the test when people in the throes try to find new, creative ways to express the way that they're feeling with a keyboard. Some people don't bother finding new and creative ways to say "I'm coming," so they say it outright, or, in the spirit of the Internet and the "information highway" they'll abbreviate it to an acronym: OMGIC (Oh My God I'm Coming).

Unlike a steamy email romance, the person on the other end will read this as it's happening.

That's real-time, achieved through the use of a chat client. A chat client is a small program that relays messages. The most popular clients are Internet Relay Chat (IRC) and Java. IRC is a web page that refreshes constantly, usually on a time interval, with the input that users provide.

A Java client is a small application called an applet that is downloaded onto the users console and updates as the other users enter text.

Victoria's major Internet Service Providers (ISPs) market themselves as family services and therefore have no sex venues among their chat rooms. The steamier chat venues tend to be on major web portals like Microsoft Network (www.msn.com) and Yahoo (www.yahoo.com), or on community sites that dedicate themselves to specific sexuality and lifestyles like Gay.com, one of the web's largest on-line communities and Nerve Magazine's on-line community (www.nerve.com).

Many users can participate at any given time, but most cybersex goes on in private. Chat clients often offer the option to send a private message to another user. They do this either by posting it in the main room but blocking other users from reading it, as often is the case with IRC, or by opening a new, private window where the two users can chat without interruption.

In private, users describe their fantasies, their fetishes, their bodies. Fantasies stretch from the Garth-Brooks-in-the-background-firelight-on-the-bearskin-rug evening to more edgy BDSM dungeonlust, to questionable incest and rape fantasies. Others are more innocuous:

```
<TIA~> I like to have a man with
  nice nails
<TIA~> take me
> well now you do
<TIA~> me
<TIA~> yes
> what are you wearing right
  now?
<TIA~> totally naked
<TIA~> long black hair
<TIA~> grey eyes
> mmmmmm
<TIA~> 36-28-34
> now I'm totally naked
```

Cybersex is a mind-fuck. Enjoyment relies upon a creative imagination and, if not belief, then a suspension of disbelief. I don't know for sure that TIA~ was naked, or that she was even a she, or even human and not a bot, a small program designed to interact with users. It's an argument for uncertainty, but in a text-based interaction, you have even less to go on than in an in-the-flesh encounter. Your fantasy is more important than their reality.

In the November 98 issue of *Flare*, David Robinson, a Toronto-based cyber-dating specialist says the main thing missing in a cyber relationship is bodies.

Though an entire industry, called dildonics, specializes in hardware designed for direct stimulation of wetware (humans), the exchange will always lack, as Bruce Springsteen puts it, a little of that human touch.

Anonymity is part of the appeal to cyber sex. It fits neatly into out society as our culture becomes more detached, providing more bang for less responsibility to its source. The trend is set: books to movies, concerts to CDs, snail-mail to e-mail, real sex to phone sex to cybersex. It can be a one night stand with almost no consequences.

Cybersex provides a forum for users to explore their sexual boundaries and expose themselves, safely, to new ideas that may lead to new experiences. Transgendered lovers can be who they are inside, because in cyberspace the body no longer matters.

While some just jam and jam, so to speak, others put a lot of stake into cyber relationships. Which brings the body into question. Does extra-relationship cybersex constitute infidelity?

Though we may be morphing through borders into a new frontier, the realm of cyber ethics is still a gray area. Our power to live in the virtual world is the apex of individualism. "It allows individuals to do with computers what the church or the state wouldn't approve of," says UVic historian John Lutz. "The PC came out of some guy's garage. It started out as a total subversion of centralist politics...It's allowed us to see what kind of flex we have as humans to become multiple personalities."

The morphing process, creating new personas on line, in chat rooms or MUDS, puts us into virtual space where we can navigate, converse and build new selves, potentially leaving a lot of time spent being someone else. It's an exciting shift in the way we create and experience human identity. But if you take the machine away, where do your new selves go? What is "real" life? And does it matter?

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In *Life on the Screen* virtual anthropologist Sherry Turkle pokes at the parameters of our new simulated selves. "Are we living life on the screen or life in the screen? Our new technologically emeshed relationships oblige us to ask to what extent we ourselves have become cyborgs, transgressive mixtures of biology, technology and code."

For some, the computer may just be the most intimate partner you've ever had.

You're riding high on the last few exchanges with "Alex," the Texas kink in your West Coast neck. You feel your barometer rising. But you've been doing the chat thing for too long. It's getting formulaic. You're stagnating. You know it, but you won't let your bubble burst. You excuse yourself from chat with "Alex." Logoff. Go to bed. Whisper that dirty word that you could hardly type with trembling digits.

Living with disease, losing your wings

Martlet photo by Genevieve Mutschler

by Mark Redgwell

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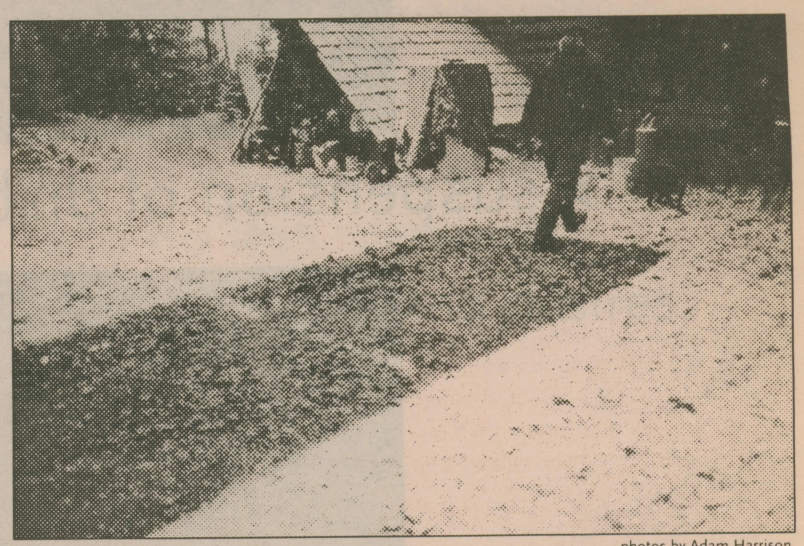

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When Jenni died, every bold notion I held about death flew out the window. Although we had only known each other for two years, she was one of my closest friends.

Jenni was always willing to do something at the drop of a hat. She'd say yes without hesitation whenever I asked if she wanted to go swimming, or go for coffee, or go walking along the beach. A friend once asked Jenni if she wanted to drive to California for reading break with him, and without giving it another thought she said she'd go.

She was always going on adventures, even if she had no money or if she had school projects due. She lived spontaneously, in the now.

She was 21 and beautiful, a talented writer and artist.

But last summer she died when her car went off the road, flipped, and the roof caved in, crushing her. I was never going to see Jenni's mischievous smile tug at the corners of her perfect mouth again.

Suddenly I shared something with all those people who have lost friends, lovers and family, people for whom the word "death" actually has meaning, more than dead bodies, cold theories.

I was shocked.

I couldn't believe the news.

Memories of her passed through my mind daily.

I felt the void her death created in my life.

A letter from the black top: a family road trip from hell (part one)

by Craig Battle

Whoever said "Getting there is half the fun" has obviously never traveled from BC to Alberta for a family reunion under time constraints.

Driving 'round the Prairies (note the drawl), is the real good time. There's just something about the long, straight stretches of highway. You hop in the car, hit the road and suddenly you're Jack Kerouac.

In any case, the great family adventure began on a Thursday morning in June. (Can you make this line a bit more interesting? Did your dog piss on your leg? Was there a tsunami coming in? Did it begin on your drive way? Etc.)

We heard a little "Sexual Healing" as we passed the Enchanted Forest in Revelstoke, and I got creative.

The plan was simple. Visit with various family members Thursday and Friday. Attend Great Grandmother's 98th birthday and family reunion festivities on Saturday. Then I would be free to fly home Sunday.

So we buckled up and Dad pointed two fingers straight ahead. It was six o'clock and there was nothing between the reunion and us but the Rockies – we were off.

The 12 hours from Vancouver to Cochrane went off without much event. Not like the time I was nine and some United moving truck came barreling from the hills and nearly hip-checked our Sentra off a bridge.

No, this trip was tame. Dad drove the whole thousand kilometers. Sue, my stepmom, sang along to Celine Dion. I ate a couple Sausage McMuffins in Chilliwack and felt sick all the way there.

We heard a little "Sexual Healing" as we passed the Enchanted Forest in Revelstoke, though, and I got creative.

In my organizer I scrawled, "Heard some Marvin Gaye on the mountain. Me and Marvin, on the night shift to Calgary." That and "Welcome to Wild Rose Country – marking the territory, marring the scenery."

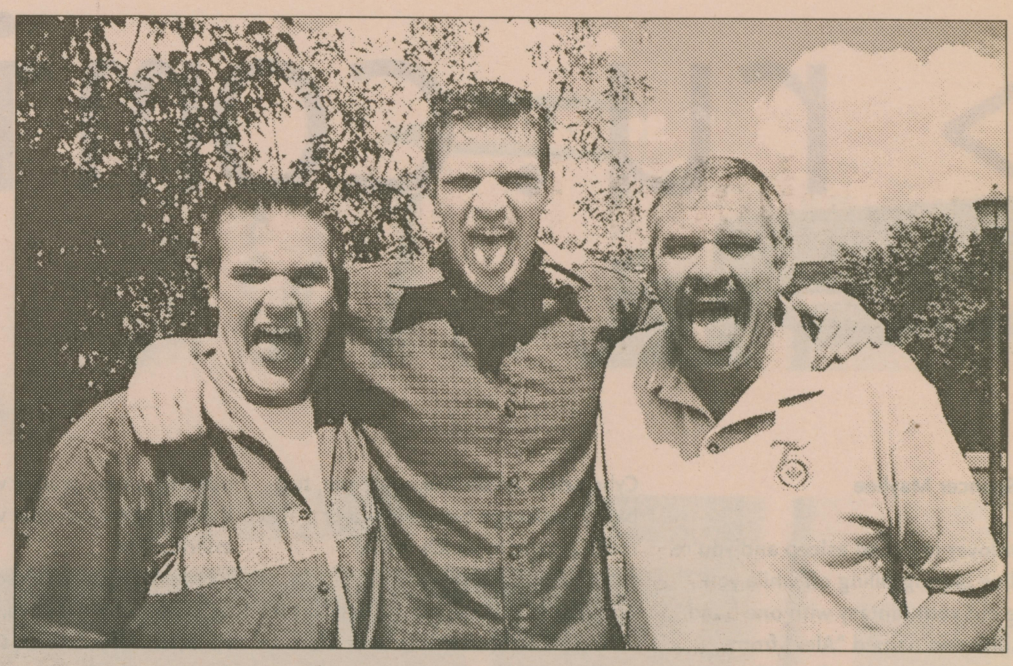
Needless to say, I was on. I credit the landscape.

We rolled up to our first stop and sleeping arrangements, my cousins' rancher in Cochrane, just after six.

We were too late for supper, but just in time to hear my grandpa talk about the skyrocketing gas prices – up above 70 cents in Revelstoke. Criminal. Just criminal.

"Yes, criminal," added my grandma.

My cousin Debbie reheated some roast beef and potatoes for Dad, Sue and me, and we all played Mad Rummy. I came in last, and then went to sleep on an air mattress in the living room.



The next morning, the three of us continued on to my Auntie Cherrone's in Lacombe. Cherrone lives on a pristine cattle ranch, with brand new silos and a raked gravel driveway.

From there, I was off to Edmonton to pick up my brother.

I buzzed up just after 3 p.m. Chris answered the door in his boxers, smoking a cigarette and wiping the sleep from his eyes. He had four pizza boxes sitting in the middle of the living room floor and told me to eat up.

Three hours, a pack of smokes and a couple beers later, we were back on the road.

While the two of us rolled along Highway 2 talking about small-town life, Chris suddenly started yelling, "Farmer's daughters, Craig! Farmer's Daughters!"

You'll never hear the terms "Farmer's daughters" or "Tight mitt" so often as you will on a prairie trek with my brother.

I think Kerouac would approve. We were on the road and nothing mattered.

Stacey Earle down home jammin' comes up North

by Gillian Jerome

The Martlet caught up with Stacey Earle in Ottawa the morning before her show at The Black Sheep Inn in Wakefield, Que. Stacey and her Nashville crew play the RootsFest at Royal Roads July 21-23.

It's early in the morning here in Victoria, and waking up to Stacey Earle's Daisy Mae twang is better than coffee. The Texas-born folk singer's dialect takes you down into the greedy gut of Southern heat, where families gather on antebellum porches with peach pies and banjos.

Mojo Wire called Stacey Earle "the best back porch discovery since Dolly Parton tumbled out of the Appalachians,"and the comparison seems to fit. Earle says it was the biggest compliment ever.

"She's an amazing musician, an incredible business woman and she lights up an airplane," says the latest folk and country live wire to come out of Nashville.

Thirtysomething Earle has had her share of hard times and it comes across in her honest, down-home country-lovin' lyrics infused with a twangy, rich sound.

"Nashville tried to work the twang out of my voice, but I talk the way I think and I sing the way I write."

Earle says she never dreamed of co-owning a record label (Gearle Records) and producing two albums.

A single mother at 17, Earle's success comes after a few hard hits, including helping older brother Steve Earle through drug addiction and recovery.

"Steve could barely help himself. We're happy to say he's six years clean now but when he goes as far as he went, the whole family takes a ride."

After raising two kids, and slinging it out in Nashville for eight years, waiting tables and learning how to write songs, she had a breakthrough that took her from diners to sold-out concerts.

After a singing duet called "Promise You Anything" on Steve's album The Hard Way in 1990, she went on tour as a back up vocalist. "I was thrown in the fire with my eyes wide open," she says.

"I had three weeks to learn four Steve Earle albums. I never dreamed of making music for a living before 30."

Earle's first album, Simple Gearle, is an impressive first cut with songs about hard living. Earle calls her second album, Dancin'with Them that Brung Me a response to all the good stuff happening in her life. "It's about things turning out now, about the family celebrating."

Earle's music is all about family. Although she had a childhood fascination with Motown, her parents were big country music fans. "We loved music. We loved it deeply," says Earle. "Steve started at such a young age. It was unavoidable."

Earle sings and plays acoustic guitar. "When I was a kid, I played the oboe but the high school band teacher ended that career early on... But I always had the ability to pick up an instrument and diddle."

Her band includes Michael Webb on accordion, mandolin organ and bass. The upright bass is played by Byron House (Emmylou Harris, Julie Miller).

Earle named her band the Jewels after her 94-year-old grandmother. She tours and plays with her husband Mark Stuart and her son Kyle Mims, a drummer and a recent high school grad, on tour with his mom's band until he starts college.

With just under 300 shows last year, Earle and the band know what it means to be a travelling road show. Earle says it's the right time in her life to be travelling.

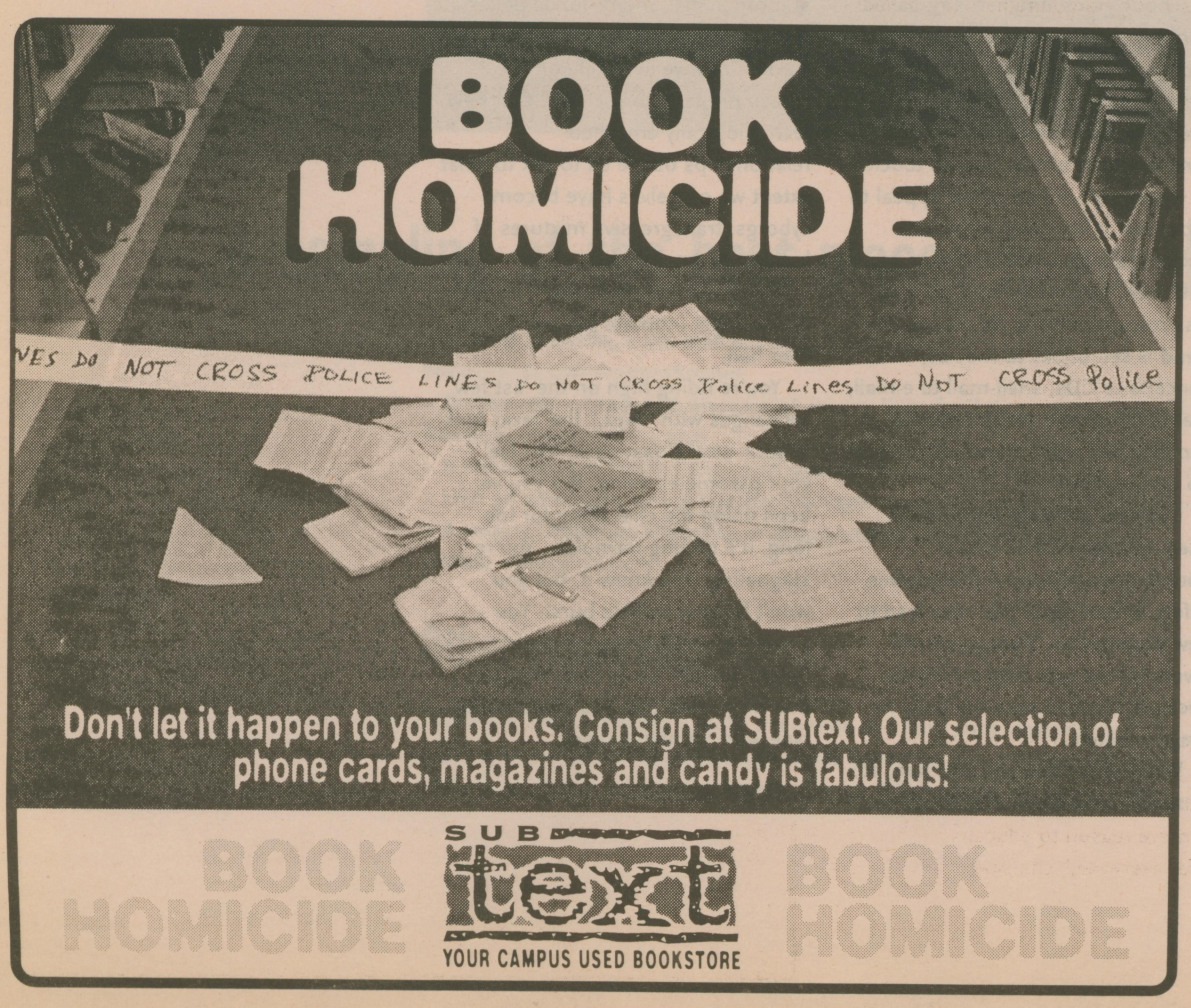
"I didn't go to college or travel. When most people were dreaming big dreams, I was dreaming about having food in the cupboard."

Now that Earle's two boys, Kyle and Christopher, are grown, she says doesn't carry any guilt about not being around. "It's tough trying to have a family and being on the road. It leaves a deep scar on the heart."

Born in Louisiana, Earle was always on the move with a father working for federal aviation. "We spread like peanut butter all over the South," she says. "But Mom always said home is where the heart is. Right now it's in Room 503 in Ottawa. When we get 'home' which is only a couple of days a year now, that's where it is at the time.'

Earle and the Jewels play the RootsFest at 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Sat. on stage. She plays at 3 p.m. Sun. on stage three and at 1 p.m. on stage 4 with her husband.

See www.rootsfest.com for the full workshop schedule.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Homophobia in school:

will it ever be okay to be queer?

by Michelle Kinney

"You two are lesbians," shrieks the high-pitched voice of the six-year-old boy from across the school yard. His two friends laugh, confident they have found the ultimate insult for the two girls playing by the slide.

While the girls try to think of a jibe to shout back, a little boy playing basketball cringes at the comment that confirms he should be ashamed of his family.

The teacher watches the common interactions of the playground and although she's not quite comfortable with the comments flying about, she's not sure how to address issues of sexual orientation to six-year-old children.

References to sexual orientation as a form of aggression have become more prevalent in our school systems, according to a recent report by the B.C. Auditor. However, the silence in the classrooms and in school policy remains, leaving families and children with queer identities in the closet.

"Homophobia works through silence," says Christina Antonick, a lesbian mother who organized a workshop at her child's school on Saltspring Island after witnessing homophobic name-calling on the playground.

Antonick says many parents think kids just don't know what they are saying when they call someone a "lesbian" or a "fag."

"I think," says Antonick, "if children are given information on same-sex orientation and can put a face or name to these real people, children would make different choices in their language."

The main issue for Antonick is that there is no queer content in school curriculum; queerness is not addressed or talked about as a positive reality. She says books and references to queer families are needed, and that words such as "gay," "lesbian" and "transgendered" must be used in the classroom.

"I believe," says Antonick, "that anti-oppression is a daily bringing of racism, homophobia and sexism into our consciousness."

The workshop was put on by the B.C. Teachers Federation (BCTF), who offer three free workshops for teachers to train them on how to address same-sex orientation and counter homophobia. Pat Clark of the BCTF says that in the last two years they have done about 50 workshops across the province and the response has been incredibly positive from teachers and parents.

However, the Ministry of Education's response has been mixed. "The Ministry has been pretty good in regards to the recommendations around bullying and violence in upper levels of school, but less accepting on specific material for younger children because they say it is too controversial," says Clark.

Clark says he has doubts that the Ministry will accept and act upon their most recent proposal recommending that children's books that deal with sexual orientation be included on the provincial recommended reading list.

Due to objections from some parents about teacher-led discussions about homosexuality, the Ministry has taken the stand that teachers can address sexual orientation by referring to resources that teach general tolerance of difference, according to the recent B.C. Auditor General's report.

Teachers, on the other hand, say that they need videos and books that deal with same-sex orientation in a positive way.

The report says that currently 40 per cent of teachers do not feel "well" or "adequately" prepared to lead discussions that would discourage their students from using negative references to sexual orientation.

As well, 32 per cent of elementary teachers and 77 per cent of secondary teachers report that negative references to sexual orientation happen "on occasion" or "often," with a quarter of teachers saying this has increased in the past few years.

Another study by the McCreary Centre released last year, found that queer youth are at a higher risk of self-destructive behaviour due to the rejection, isolation and lack of acceptance they experience in schools and community.

Nearly half of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) youth surveyed said that they have tried to commit suicide at least once, with their first attempt at an average age of 13, says Clark. In 1998, 25 per cent of LGBT youth attempted suicide as compared to seven per cent of heterosexual youth.

The McCreary study also said that 82 per cent of other youth "sometimes" or "often" make homophobic remarks and that 37 per cent of LGBT youth feel "almost always" or "always" like an outsider. The McCreary report makes suggestions for promoting the health of LGBT youth, including training programs for professionals and teachers and action to discourage discrimination.

> I think if children are given information on same-sex orientation and can put a face or name to these real people, they would make different choices in their language.

Similarly, the B.C. Auditor's recommendation says, "the Ministry of Education and school districts should provide teachers with suitable guidance for encouraging tolerance and respect for students of same-sex orientation."

According to Terry Foster of the Ministry of Education, his crew just responded to the Auditor's report with a draft "diversity policy framework" to be implemented in the 2000-2001 school year. "This policy will support school boards in promoting and teaching tolerance, celebrating diversity and addressing issues of racism, sexism and homophobia," says Foster.

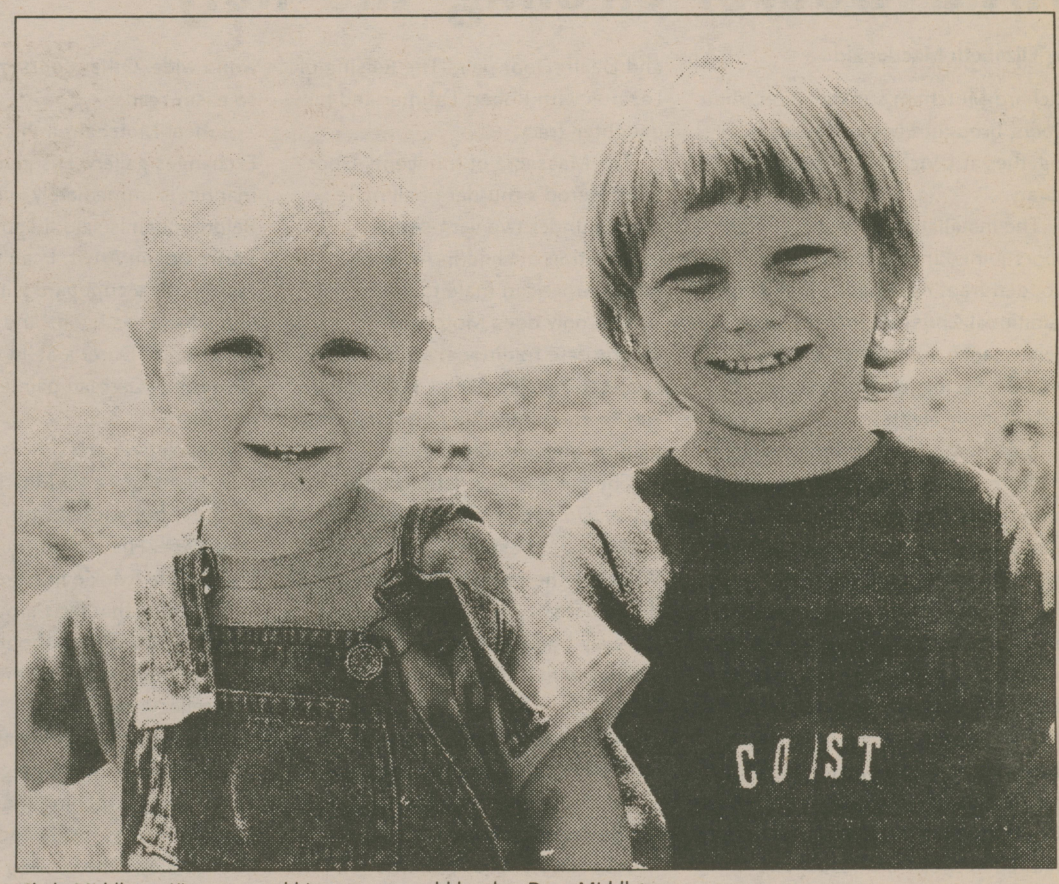
However, the past ambivalence of the Ministry leaves some to question whether same-sex orientation will be included in policies to stop bullying.

Local groups are taking it upon themselves to spread the good word. The Victoria Youth Pride Society and Parents and Families of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) currently educate high school students about homophobia. A newly- formed called the Victoria Pride Action Group hopes to work with these groups to initiate a pilot project creating a harassment-free school.

These groups address stereotypes such as the idea that the gay and lesbian community is out to recruit and convert children. They explain that sexual orientation is something people are born with and is not something to be ashamed of.

"A big concern for parents at the workshop we organized was that it is not appropriate for six-year-olds to know what two women do in bed," says Antonick. "That's not my agenda. This is about family and whose family gets represented and accepted and how this affects our children."

Antonick says she thinks the current statistic that says that one out of 10 people are queer is low. This means that in a class of 40 children, four children will grow up to be queer and most will have a family member or friend who is queer. All the more reason to educate. "Homophobia touches everyone," she says.



Chela Middleton Kinney, 5, and his seven-year-old brother Deva Middleton.

photo by Michelle Kinney

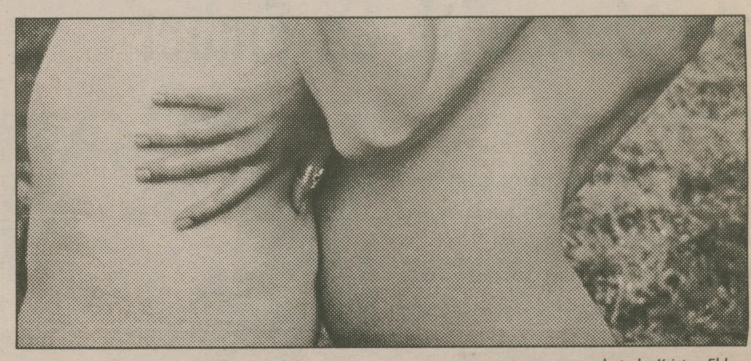


photo by Kristen Elder

A Map of the Holy Lands

by Heather Jessup

Your body lies before me,
divided as Canaan was.
Each part of you a
strange word
in my mouth.

Manasseh.
A river between your shoulder blades.
I lean my hair into the water,
float a lotus to the sea.

Sebaste.
The well between your legs
I drink life and I'm healed.

Phoenicia.
Your breath
against my neck. The sky darkens.
Desert larks take flight.

Asur.
The colour of your eyes.
Gold fields. Green meadows.

Bashan.
Your skin a house of cedar. Saffron and cinnamon.
A poem drawn with calamus reed
between the lines of your palm.

Altar Doors: circling the holy

by Elizabeth Macdonald

Richard Motcham's installation, *Altar Doors*, brought Elvis and Jesus together at UVic's MacPherson library.

The installation consists of eight doors joined into a room by open, wooden framing. Images involving traditional Christian themes from the Renaissance are painted on the outside. Facing in are examples of today's equivalents.

Motcham uses the Renaissance art form of the altar piece expanded onto doors. Traditional subjects of altar pieces are the Virgin and child with saints, and scenes from the Life of Jesus. Along one side of the room, on the centre door, Motcham pairs the Virgin and Child also known as the Madonna with the pop singer.

This door is flanked by St. Irene paired with St. Teresa and St. John the Baptist paired with Martin Luther King. On the other side the doors are painted scenes from Jesus' life.

The Moneychangers Door is the driving out of moneychangers from the temple with the TV evangelists Tammy Faye and Jim Baker. The Life and Death Door pairs The Raising of Lazarus with Robert Latimer and his daughter Tracy.

The Massacre of Innocents Door pairs Herod's murder of all male infants under two with sexual exploitation of child in Asian by North American male tourists.

Not only does Motcham incorporate traditional art forms and subjects, he also uses a traditional way to encounter the holy: circuambulation while contemplating.

The piece is wonderfully interactive. Do I go in? Do I touch this art?

What do these images mean? What are the commonalities and the differences?

Away I go. Walking around it. Circuambulate. Open a door. Go in. Look.

Walk around. Out another door. In a different door. Sit. Contemplate.

All doors open. All doors closed. Inside, I can't see the outside.

Altar Doors requires some understanding of Judeo-Christian stories, otherwise it's a puzzle. The meaning behind the door of Jesus and Elvis is obvious, both are known world wide. Other doors may not be so easily read.

I meet Motcham in his studio at Exchanges gallery. His gentle, lively manner is immediately apparent. Before much is said, I spot his Portrait of an Artist. I can't contain myself. It's a cupboard with two lion's heads as knobs and a painted rendition of Durer's Self-Portrait. (Durer is a German painter and engraver.)

I reach over and open the doors. Out it jumps – a 3D Motcham, posed as Durer but backed with a local landscape. His self-portrait catches the real-life twinkle in his eye and the subtle smile that flirts around his mouth when talking about his art. Does he reflects his art or is it his art that reflects him?

He says he wants his art to be fun, interactive and ambiguous at first viewing. Opening the doors, considering the inside and the outside slows the viewing process resulting in further contemplation.

Motcham casts the 3D images inside the cupboards from life, making a plaster moulds directly from the person or object. Canvas strips are then pinned against the plaster and plastic resin is poured in. The plaster is removed exposing the canvas in the original shape ready to be painted. So the result is Motcham traditionally painting canvas but in 3D.

Portrait of an Artist's Wife, based on the head and shoulders of Ruben's painting of his wife wrapped in cloak, logically has Motcham's own wife inside. There is a cupboard with George de Latour's hurdy-gurdy player painted on the doors and a three dimensional, local busker inside. Another is of a still-life taken from a painting by the Spaniard, Zuberon matched with a 3D version of its teacup and lemon.

I ask Motcham about the perverable problem of an artist: balancing art, family and income. He says his solution is a consious decision. With his wife he negotiates to spend Saturdays in his studio. During the week he works part-time at a job with good benefits. He lives modestly. Thus he has time and energy for his art and his family.

photo by Richard Warrington

Richard Motcham with a self portrait in his studio in Esquimalt.

Interview with an Ember

by Mark Redgwell

On July 1st I took sanctuary from the hordes of one-day nationalists with Ember Swift at Steamers.

Ember Swift is hard to describe. She's been called a "brilliant jazz vocalist inhabiting the body of an alternative punk-folk singer-songwriter," and that explains the range of my experience of her. I love funk and folk and I don't care for punk.

The first time I saw Ember was at last year's EstroFest and I only caught the very end of her performance. Her music was funky and folky and I started dancing the moment I walked in.

I was so impressed that I made a point of arranging my holiday in Saskatoon to coincide with her playing there. Alas, it was a very different venue and a very different experience. The Fringe Festival was in town and turn out was small, though intimate. There was no dancing and her full repertoire had pieces that jarred my petite range of musical sensibility.

Her Canada Day performance was different. Perhaps it was because the band was taping live for their next album. Perhaps the abundance of sweat-soaked, air-borne estrogen molecules and my desire to dance catalyzed with enough mojo to transcend the limits of my musical appreciation.

Either way, Ember and cohorts were on and I grooved to everything they played. It also made the interview at the end of the night memorable.

MR: Why a live album?

ES: People are always coming up and saying we sound much better live. A live recording captures our energy and the energy of the audience. It also captures our stupid antics, and that's what people want to take home with them.

MR: You mentioned on stage that Victoria has always been a good experience. Was that performance spin or what?

ES: No, not at all. Victoria has always been a sparkly place for us. We have never had a bad show here. Even at the first show we had in Victoria when we were completely unknown people came and were dancing. It was great.

photo by Mark Redgwell

MR: What role or function do you think independent music plays in society, culture and in social change?

ES: I think it is an instrument for change. It is made by people doing what they love. And there are different types of independent music. There are those who are waiting to be signed by a big label, and those, like us, who want to remain independent musicians where there is no corporate presence and no mass marketing. And I'm not saying all bands get screwed up by signing with a major label. Some bands need the label. Music like mine is largely word of mouth and activist-based. There is no underground for pop music, so if that is the type of music [the artist makes] then obviously they need a label.

MR: In light of musicians like Dr. Dre and Eminem, what kind of impact does music, in particular lyrics, have on people and what responsibility does the lyricist have in because of that impact?

ES: We are a lyrically driven band, the point of my music is the words. I want to hear what people think, whether they agree or disagree. I think artists have the responsibility to be honest, respectful, and to listen to their critics. An artist can get too caught up in projecting rather than listening.

MR: So what about Dr. Dre, do you think he is being responsible?

ES: I don't know, I haven't heard his music. I don't believe in censorship, though I do think they [artists] need to listen to their critics.

MR: What kind of effect to you want to have?

ES: I want people to be happy and have a good time. A performance is an exchange. What I get from the audience should be just as important as what the audience gets from me.

VIEWPOINT:

A sexy, sexy world

Imagine a sex-positive world in which fucking is an art form, and being a slut is about enjoyment.

by Kristen Elder

Imagine a world that encourages the fluidity of gender expression, and goes beyond the binary myth of male and female. A world where each person's diverse expressions along a gender continuum is celebrated, not shunned with bigotry and violence.

Endless possibilities abound in an omnisexual universe. Multiplicity of sexual expression could challenge the boundaries of gender and sexuality, subvert the boxes society tries to fit us all into. Leaving the comfort of the boxes behind means recognizing the potential inherent in each person to express their gender and sexuality however they wish.

That constant flux in sexual expression is possible and exciting. Borders fall away in a sex-positive universe in which no one tries to control another's sexuality, fantasy, and gender expression.

"If you are not a transsexual, transgender, or intersexual, if you're not a cross-dresser, bigender, or drag queen or king, then perhaps you already understand that defending our right to be who we are is inextricably tied to your own right to explore and define who you are. Each individual has a stake in trans liberation," writes Leslie Feinberg in *Transgender Warriors*.

Indeed, if more people celebrate other people's gender expression, then they can become more open to the creative possibilities of their own gender fluidity.

"Polymorphous desire and the fluid, non-fixed identities they entail do not allow for the power hierarchies many wish to erect and maintain," writes Travers Scott in *Pomosexuals: Challenging Assumptions About Gender and Sexuality*. Indeed, those intent on controlling the population's sexual expression, through public policy and religious codes of conduct are quickly losing their ideological footing as more and more people challenge these invasive regimes.

Sex is subversive because a population that is openly sexually expressive is harder to control than a sexually-oppressed society. I see sexual freedom as part of a larger trend within anarchy, of people expressing freedom and self-autonomy in their lives and communities.

The queer community sets an example by celebrating the many forms sexuality can take, and challenges the anti-sex attitudes of repressive institutions and policies that attempt to limit people's pleasure.

Sexual identity politics is useful for galvanizing large groups of people in the fight for social justice and an end to discrimination. Identifying as a bi-dyke, for example, can make it easier to meet other queer women and work for acceptance. But there are so many people who feel that they simply do not fit any one label, that their identity is constantly shifting.

Insistence upon strict borders between queer and heterosexual communities does not account for the fluidity of desire that actually gets expressed. Many openly heterosexual men, for example, often engage in sex with other men, yet won't call themselves bisexual or gay. There are many diverse and sensual ways to express being trans-gendered, heterosexual, gay, bi-sexual, lesbian, or intersexed.

"I'm far more excited these days by ideas running through the bi, transgender, S/M and kink movements. Instead of protecting territory and rigidly policing identity boundaries and definitions, they're doing the opposite. They're asking more questions, pushing issues further, introducing shades of gray," writes Scott.

Living beyond the boundaries of identity can start with one's fantasy life, and lead to some pretty exciting and sexy activity. Sex between a bi-dyke and bi-fag is considerably queer. A multi-gendered threesome goes beyond quick labels and embraces the shades of gray. Susie Bright suggests a stimulating way to define yourself: "Next time some one asks you what you are sexually, tell them that nouns will not do. Deliver a story of the last time you were sexual, or imagined an erotic fantasy, and this description will be full of verbs and adjectives and even material that almost defies words."

Imagine a sex-positive world in which fucking is an art form, and being a slut is about enjoyment. Welcome a world of positive sexual anarchy in which everyone is doing everyone, safely and consensually, a polyamourous universe in which no one attempts to own anyone, and everyone is free and self-autonomous. Where no one is oppressed because of their sexuality or gender expression, and desire and diversity is celebrated.

I'd like to carry this vision into the streets and bedrooms of the world, and leave behind the vestiges of a hypocritical and moralistic paradigm for good, to continue challenging what mainstream society dictates about gender identity and sexual expression. I encourage people to rethink their identities so that they can better understand others, permutations of gender and sexual identity, until all people's inherent freedom and choice is a reality.

Sri Chinmoy triathlon integrates mind and body

by Scott Roberts

At six a.m. the water is still as cold as the air outside. Bodies move languidly across the beach and people are stretching, chatting and anticipating the cold and the pain. The realization that they are going to be running into that water then swimming and fighting their way through about 400 people for more than nearly four km is anything but comforting. But then again, the triathalon has never really been about comfort.

"The first five minutes of a triathalon is just pure adrenaline" said triathlete Rachel Brown while sitting outside of Frontrunners. "It's just a mass of feet and legs and water . . . getting kicked in the face and trying to get relaxed and find a spot in the water where you're comfortable."

This physical torture known as the triathlon dates all the way back to the mid- seventies. It was started by Jack Johnstone and Don Shanahan in Mission Bay, California. Both were looking to start biathlons but Johnstone wanted to combine swimmming and running and Shanahan wanted to do biking and running. The San Diego Track Club decided to introduce the two guys in hopes of combining the two so that there wouldn't be too many "weird" races on the track club's roster.

The triathlon came to Canada, like many other things, by way of our neighbours to the south. Sahasi Erben was studying under his guru, Sri Chinmoy, in New York when he heard about a three part race going on in Rhode Island. Erben competed in Rhode Island and enjoyed it so much that he brought the idea back to Victoria and organized the Sri Chinmoy Triathlon.

That was 21 years ago, making the Sri Chinmoy Triathlon the oldest race of its kind in Canada. But the tenacity required to carry on such an event for such a long time comes from more than the giving spirit of the students of Sri Chinmoy.

"The triathlon fits in with our spiritual philosophy . . . Sri Chinmoy tries to promote the integral use of all parts of the being in harmony . . . the mind and body have certain individual capacities so when you can bring all these capacities together in harmony then everything can be accomplished on earth."

Although this is not the view of all triathletes, most will agree that if you can swim, bike and run a triathlon you can do just about anything. Essentially, the triathlon is a test of the sheer force and speed by which humans can propel themselves across the earth. But it's also a test of mental strength, of pushing the body beyond what it is able to do on its own.

But don't let the difficulty dissuade you, the Sri Chinmoy Triathlon is definitely open to all skill levels. There are only two categories for entrants in the Sri triathlon, under 50 and over 50. The people who participate in the Sri triathlon run the gamut of skill and experience levels. "A lot of people who don't do a lot of triathlons use [the] Sri Chinmoy [triathlon] as the focal point of the season," Rachel Brown suggests, "because it's later on in the season and it gives you lots of time to train for it, and because it's well organized and lots of fun."

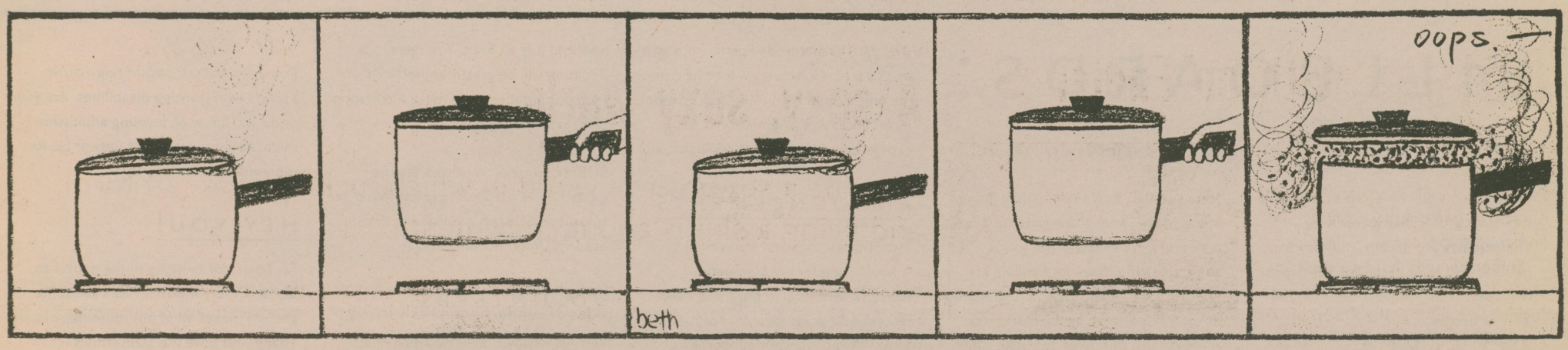
The organization of the big event is what keeps most of Sri Chinmoy's students on the sidelines. Not surpisingly, considering the Sri triathlon offers incredible veggie pasta, massage tables, t-shirts, and awards ceremonies for all of the contestants.

"This is something that [Sri Chinmoy's students] do for the community," mentions Jhamala, "which is why almost all of our members are volunteering in the triathlon rather than racing."

It's difficult to organize an event this size, especially one that uses so few corporate sponsors (Thrifty's is the only one), and even more so if expectations are high for quality of food, organization, post-race festivities and the course itself. But these are just some of the reasons that world class athletes like Lori Bowden (winner of the 2000 Australian Ironman and the 1998 Sri Chinmoy Triathlon) compete alongside first time triathletes in the Sri Chinmoy Triathlon.

photo by Jhalmala

The first swimmer out of the water heads out on the bicycle route.



Conversations with my Penis OR What The Body Reminds Us

by Tom Howell

It usually goes like this:
Brain: Oh, look. She glanced at me.
Penis: Wanna have sex, wanna have sex, wanna do it...
Brain: Ah, we're drinking wine together. How pleasant.
Penis: Wanna have sex, wanna do it, rarr, rarr, boom-boom, yeah!
Brain: Old life stories, new private jokes. I haven't felt such a strong connection with someone in hours/days/weeks/months.
Penis: Boogie-time, yeah, wanna do it, wanna do it, ol' one-eye needs a trip to the optometrist, whoopeee!
Brain: Oh, look. It appears that we're going to have sex now.
Penis: Whee! Phtt. Zzzzz....
Brain: Oops.

THE BASEMENT APARTMENT

The first time it happened, two summers ago, my high-school English teacher, Mr. Hanbidge, popped up in my head. He introduced me to the idea of penis problems. He was explaining a line in Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* to me and my classmates, all sweaty, spotty boys-school boys. The line is Martha's, spoken when she returns to her own dinner party after an abortive dalliance with a young male school teacher: "What's the matter? Can't you get the latch up either?" (Apparently, it refers to the impotence of the American Dream.)

As I lay naked and spent beside Kyla on a foam mattress in my basement apartment in Smithers, Mr. Hanbidge glared at me from behind his bottle-bottom glasses and mouthed "Impotence!" like he was giving me a detention. I started arguing with him. This wasn't impotence, sir. This was just coming too early. Impotence means you can't even get an erection. Premature ejaculation is one notch above that, at least.

I mumbled out loud: "That's funny. It hasn't happened like that before."

Kyla, who had met me at a music festival one week before, said, "Don't worry. I don't mind."

"You know, I can be quite good at this."

[continued on page 12]

ASTRONOMY 120 (Y04)

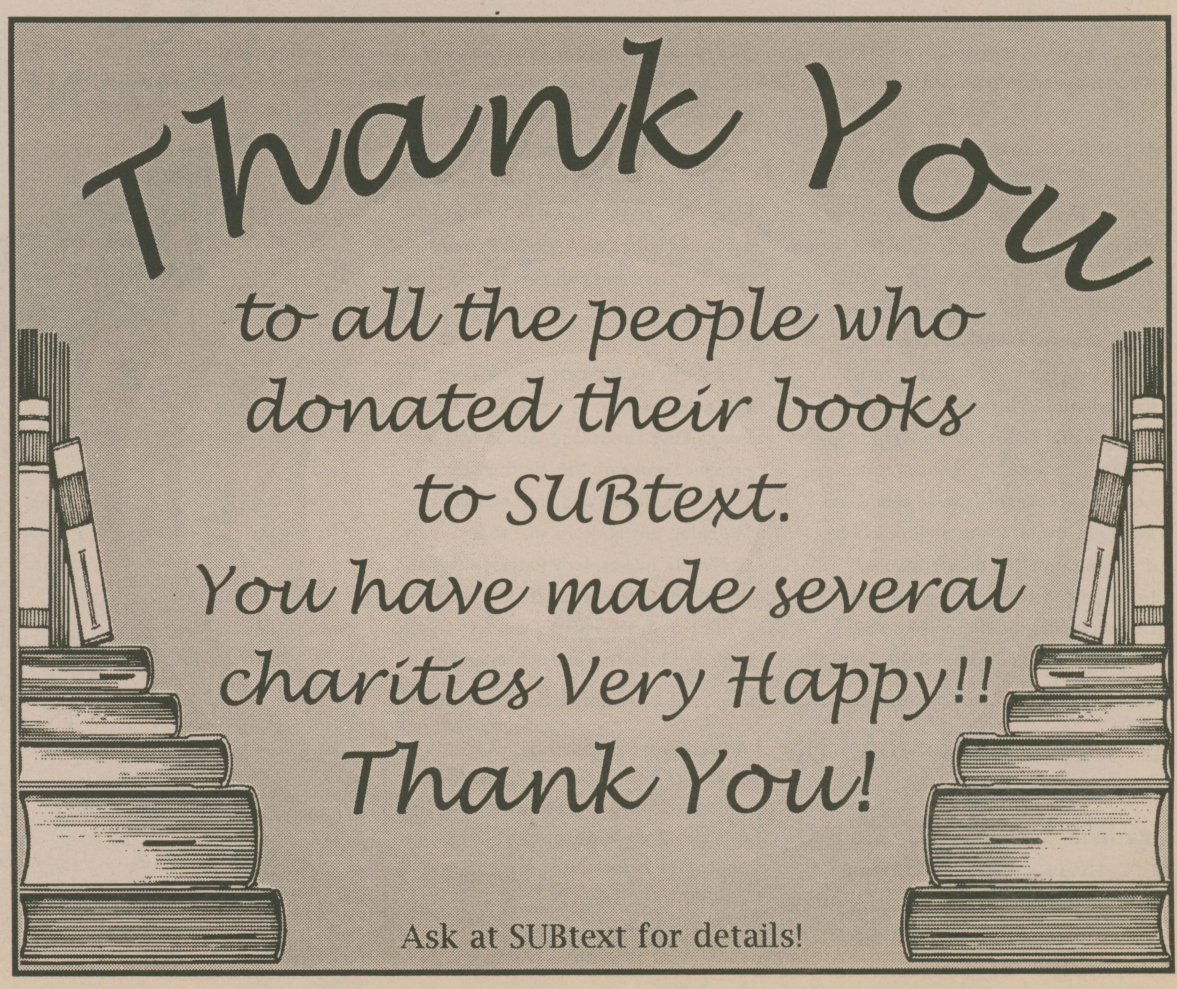
Are you a non-Science Student?
Do you have a general interest in Astronomy?
Are you looking for an evening course this Fall?

Announcing an Evening Section (Y04) of
Elementary Astronomy (ASTR120)
Starting September 2000 Wednesdays 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Ever wonder about the origin and evolution of the universe? The birth and life cycle of stars? What a black hole is? Do you ponder the possibility of extraterrestrial life or cosmic catastrophes? Do you want to learn about the constellations and other features of the night sky? This course is specifically designed for students NOT majoring in science. In addition to stimulating lectures, students will have the opportunity to experience practical and observational work.

For further information, check out the ASTR 120 listing on the 2000/01 Web Timetable at http://www.uvic.ca/timetable or phone 721-7700.

Department of Physics and Astronomy



Erectile betrayals

[continued from page 11]

"I believe you."
I wasn't worried, yet. It was easy to explain.

Reasons for this disturbing occurrence of premature ejaculation:
(1) Rachel broke up with me last week, over the phone. I am still in love with her.
(a) She has been my first love, and my first lover.
(2) I feel guilty about using Kyla
(a) for comfort
(b) for ego-reinforcement
(c) to show off to Rachel.
(3) I haven't had sex since April. (It is July. I left Victoria after spring exams to take a summer job in Smithers.)
(4) Kyla's body is different. I need time to adapt.

The second time it happened was in Kyla's tent.

THE TENT

Brain: Oh, look. Morning has broken. Sunlight filters through the canvas.
Penis: Wanna have sex, wanna do it, rarr, rarr.
Brain: We bask on sleeping bags, warm and nude, lazily stroking each other.
Penis: Yah, rumpa-pumpa, yum-yum!
Brain: Right, note-to-self. Must remember not to ejaculate as soon as we—
Penis: Whee! Phtt. Zzzz...
Brain: Oops.

In the sex-therapy trade, premature ejaculation is called PE. It's an ED (erectile dysfunction). I learned this from Jody Bresgi, a spokesperson for the Canadian Men's Clinic, which advertises "Sex for Life" in the Vancouver Sun.

"PE means different things to different people," Bresgi tells me.

"To some men, it means that they can't enjoy uninterrupted intercourse for hours on end because they have not mastered the tantric method and instead reach their messy orgasm after half an hour. To other men, it means the warm froth of life bursts into daylight before intercourse even begins. The clinic defines PE as 'ejaculating before you want to ... so that it causes emotional anxiety.'"

To me, premature ejaculation is a bit like making rice in the wrong-sized pot (although size, I hasten to add, is otherwise irrelevant to the analogy). I have to concentrate on stopping the water from boiling out from under the lid. I'm constantly removing it from the heat, never able to reach that comfortable level of simmer and steam. It takes all the fun out of cooking rice. It means, I'm afraid to say, bad rice.

Everyone says that PE is widespread. One American man in three, according to the numerous sex-ed web sites. Bresgi says that 52 per cent of men aged 40 to 70 experience an ED.

"It's so common. People just don't talk about it," she says. Some psychologists believe PE is even more common among young men, who are much less likely to seek help. Left unattended, the problem grows from a surprise annoyance to a constant worry that makes the whole idea of sex stressful to the sufferer.

The problem is vicious. Premature ejaculation is an anxiety-causing condition caused by anxiety. It fuels itself. It operates unconsciously, obeying instructions from some obscure penis-brain, using penis logic.

Brain: But I'm quite happy to have good sex. I'm over the heartbreak associated with my last deeply sexual relationship, and ready to move on. To quote Ovid: "Rumpa-pumpa time, wa-hey!"
Penis: Good sex equals Rachel. Rachel equals heartbreak. Aaargh! Employ heartbreak-prevention plan: Phtt. Zzz...

It's the penis equivalent of an emergency ejector-seat. It's launching the escape capsule. It's parachuting out of the airplane the moment the wheels lift off the runway. It's safe. But it's stupid.

Local therapist Kim Daly says she helps patients with PE by discussing in detail their sexual history, and talking explicitly about what happens during sex. She often speaks with the PE-sufferer's partner too, and teaches control methods such as "the squeeze technique," which involves squeezing the base of the penis before the man reaches the point of no return. This reduces blood flow to the erection and can prevent ejaculation.

(The Canadian Men's Clinic goes further, recommending numbing creams and erection-maintaining medication.)

And then there's the idiosyncratic solutions that arise with a patient partner. My latest solution, two years on, is to talk about Roman history out loud. This technique, while admittedly clumsy, makes sex last long enough for my current partner and I to have a fighting chance of reaching mutual orgasm.

I do hope to progress beyond it soon. I'm not sure what better definition of a bad sexual partner there could be than a British man who must recite details of the battle of Carthage so as not to come within seconds.

Daly doesn't think much of distraction methods: "Certainly, thinking about a grocery list isn't going to help." She suggests that sex is likely to be better quality when both partners have their mind on the matter at hand, and I'm inclined to agree.

I remember good sex. It's not complicated. Good sex:
(i) goes on a long time,
(ii) provides a minimum of one orgasm per person,
(iii) makes me forget all about coming too early.
(iv) does not involve an oral Roman history lesson.

All variations or additions must be justified on a case-by-case basis.

On the road back to good sex, it seems odd that the body can be this defensive, that it can have stored so deeply the hurt of a break-up that, even two years later, what was once the easiest, most comfortable, fun thing to do has become the most stressful, the most worrying – as scary, even, as falling in love again. Whatever else you say about them, penises are honest.

BILLBOARDS:

ON CAMPUS

YOUR BICYCLE DESERVES TO BE SAFE AND DRY. Rent a UVic bike locker now. Students pay $16, faculty/staff pay $20 until the end of August. Plus key deposit required.

OFF CAMPUS

THE VICTORIA SCHOOL OF WRITING presents an evening of readings by Anne Fleming, Marlene Cookshaw and Mark Zuehlke. Thursday, July 20 from 7 to 8 p.m. at the music room of St. Margaret's School (1080 Lucas Ave.). Admission is $5 or by donation. For more information please call 595-3000.

THE SIERRA CLUB OF B.C.'s Great Bear Rainforest Bus Tour rolls into Victoria Saturday, July 22. The bus contains the world's only living rainforest on wheels and will be open to the public at Clover Point, on Dallas Road, from noon to 5:00 p.m. For complete tour details, visit www.greengrooves.com or www.sierraclub.ca/bc

THE 16TH ANNUAL FIRST PEOPLES FESTIVAL: "A Celebration of Friendship and Understanding" is coming soon: August 11,12 & 13. The Festival will feature a variety of events including an artists market, traditional and contemporary performances, traditional foods and family programs. Storytellers from throughout B.C. will be giving their nation's oral history in the First People's Gallery (3rd floor of the Royal British Columbia Museum). World-renowned Kwaguilth artist, Richard Hunt will be demonstrating the time-honoured tradition of totem pole carving in the carving studio at Thunderbird Park throughout the duration of the Festival. For more details please call 384-3211.

JOIN THE RAG RUG COMMUNITY Project at the Moss Street Market. Learn a folk craft and recycle old clothes into a community rug. Days for hooking are Aug. 19, Sept. 9 and Oct. 14. Call Martha at 598-7286 or drop by the market for more details. Check out the huge variety of vendors, vegetables, crafts, delicious foods and special event days. The markets, located at Sir James Douglas School (Thurlow and Moss), starts at 10 a.m. and runs until 2 p.m. every Saturday through-out the summer.

JAMES BAY COMMUNITY MARKET is home to fresh summer veggies and fruit from local growers, free range eggs, baking, flowers, art and crafts, live music and entertainment, kids' tent and more. The market runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. every Saturday throughout the summer at the corner of Menzies and Superior Streets.

THE GOVERNMENT STREET MARKET is up and running for another exciting season. Drop by to check out the various crafts, clothing, collectors, music, the atmosphere and fantastic functional gift ideas. This street market is located between Fisgard and Pandora streets and runs Sundays and Holidays from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

THE VICTORIA SCHOOL OF WRITING presents a lecture series: Maps to the Imaginative Landscape. Susan Mayse will present Smoke on the Wind: Writing History in Fiction and Non-fiction, Thursday, July 20 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. On Friday, July 21, Jody Paterson will be presenting The Passionate Observer - Writing from the Heart, from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. and Joan McLeod will lecture on Why the Theatre needs Poetry, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. All lectures will be held in the music room at St. Margaret's School (1080 Lucas Ave). Admission is $15 for each lecture. No charge to VSW students.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE HIDDEN VICTIMS' SOCIETY is fundraising for the Marguerite Telesford Memorial in Mt. Doug Park. Pick up a $2 ticket for a chance to win a $1000 cash prize while supporting a great cause. Tickets will be on sale at Shelbourne Plaza Friday, July 21 and Saturday, July 22 and the following weekend July 28 & 29. Your generous donation will be greatly appreciated. For more information or to make a donation please call 216-9421.

SUBTEXT HAS RATEBLASTER PHONE CARDS! Rates astonishingly low! Must see to believe! SUBtext is located in the Student Union Building at UVic.

VOLUNTEERS

FRIENDLY YOUNG WOMAN with a mild mental disability looking for someone who likes crafts, musicals, gym or coffee. Please contact Bluma at 477-6607 for more info.

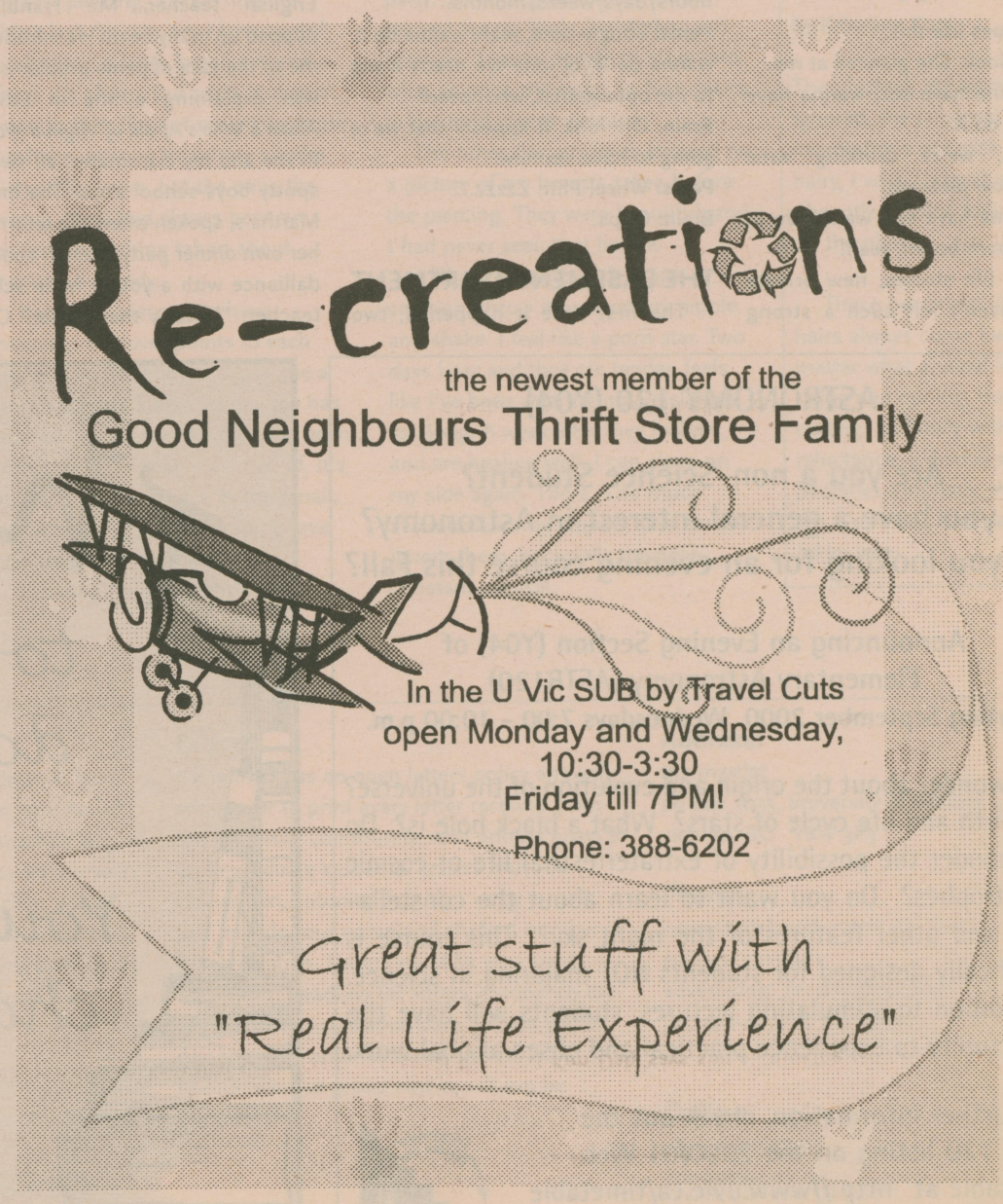
FORMING SOCIAL GROUP FOR YOUNG ADULTS with learning disabilities. Are you, or do you know of, a young adult who might be interested? Call Judy or Liz for more information 474-1230.

HEY YOU!

TO TONY, for bringing in the papers to SUBtext every morning! This awesome gesture makes all of our mornings easier! Thank you! Love the SUBtextuals.

DAVE... have a great time in Ottawa, We'll miss you. C&K

BILLBOARD RATES

students & clubs	$2/issue
non-students	$2/line
businesses	$5.50/3 lines
hey you!	$1/issue

All religious clubs and organizations advertising on the billboards page must adhere to the following statement:
"Everyone is welcome. We oppose discrimination on the basis of race, gender and sexuality."